

**IDENTITY NEGOTIATION OF CHINESE STUDENTS IN CANADA:
A STUDY ON COSMOPOLITAN POST-GRADUATION SETTLEMENT**

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Abstract

This study focuses on the analysis of the acculturation of Chinese international students in Canada, with an emphasis on students' post-graduation settlement in China, Canada or other countries. Chinese international students commonly experience a multilayered acculturative adjustment when they are challenged by a new culture. In this process, they develop an identity negotiation that impacts their settlement into a new country. This study mobilizes the model of acculturation and four notions of acculturation (assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation), to evaluate Chinese international students' identity negotiation after the acculturation. This research uses 17 semi-structured interviews, to understand how participants' identities were negotiated through their acculturative adjustment. The findings highlight the importance of career factors and family values in participants' settlement decisions, while the balance between Chinese identity and Canadian identity has some impact on student's migration plans.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Context

Recruitment of international students is one of the strategies of Western nation-states to enhance their global competitiveness, to sponsor their education system and most importantly to recruit highly skilled workers (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005). China has been contributing to this global flow of human capital since Deng Xiaoping's 1978 Reforms¹. According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, "5,194,900 Chinese students have studied abroad over the last 40 years, and 1,454,100 students are currently enrolled in overseas higher education institutions" (2018, para. 2). Among all Chinese students who have studied abroad, 83.73% of them returned to China upon graduation (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018, para. 3). China's goal is to become a global AI leader by 2030 (Deng & Chen, 2018, para. 14). In order to achieve this goal, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced that recruiting overseas tech talents to return home was one of the government's priorities for 2018 (Deng & Chen, 2018, para. 8). Meanwhile, as of 2017, 28% of international students in Canada were Chinese (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018, p. 3), which is about 140,530 Chinese students. Overall, Statistics Canada (2018) also reported a total number of 649,260 Chinese immigrants in Canada, making mainland China the second-largest source of immigrants in 2016. While international students become a human capital that Western nation-states are competing for, their post-graduation settlement could be impacted by their identity negotiation in Canada.

Upon relocating to a new culture, Chinese international students face challenges from the sociocultural transition to psychological distress (Anderson, 1994; Wang et al., 2012). Since

students are strangers to the local surroundings, they usually experience difficulties in making new friends with host nationals, in improving their language skill, in understanding local cultural customs, and in adjusting to the new academic environment (Anderson, 1994; Poteet & Gomez, 2015; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). At the same time, their psychological obstacles vary from depression to homesickness (Anderson, 1994; Rui & Wang, 2015; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Consequently, international students' adaptation to the host nation is understood as an acculturative adjustment that involves a process of identity negotiation (Yu, 2018, p. 23).

Most Western universities train their students with a cosmopolitan worldview because their "nation-states would benefit from such multicultural attuned citizens" (Fincher, 2011, p. 911). At the same time, living in an unfamiliar multicultural environment, foreign students would have to adjust their identity towards a cosmopolitan way of life to cope with various layers of stressors (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 380). Similar to international students, racialized immigrants are usually forced to adapt to the local culture and commit to "whiteness" (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 2), especially when they try to prove their value and to be accepted by the local society. When Chinese international students move from a Chinese-dominated social system to Canada, they have to negotiate and to adapt to the Canadian multicultural environment. If international students decide to move back to China, relocation from a multicultural environment back to a comparatively exclusive Chinese environment could as well become a challenge for them.

This research focuses on factors of acculturation that affect Chinese international students' post-graduation settlement in Canada, in China, and in other Western nations. Post-graduation settlement will be divided into three categories: Category 1 includes Chinese

students who have decided to stay in Canada; Category 2 refers to students who returned to China upon graduation, and Category 3 is students who returned to China but relocated to Canada or in the West.

1.2 Research Questions

Since identity negotiation is one of the major factors of international students' acculturation, to what degree does it impact Chinese international students' future blueprint, core values, and settlement decisions. To analyze this problematic, this study focuses on answering the following questions:

What is the relationship between the process of identity negotiation and the post-graduate decision of Chinese students to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle in China, or (c) re-immigrate outside of China?

1) *To what extent acculturative experience affects international students' decision to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle back in China or (c) re-immigrate to a different country outside China and Canada?*

2) *What is the impact of a cosmopolitanism education on their decision to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle back in China or (c) re-immigrate to a different country outside China and Canada?*

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 International Students

“International students” usually refers to students who are studying in another country and holding a permit or a visa (Bista, 2018). Because they are in a temporary status, they have limited opportunities in the host nations (Bista, 2018). Statistics Canada considers “students in Canada on a visa or refugees, neither of which have permanent residency status in Canada” as international students (as cited in Salven, 2017, p. 4).

2.1.1 Motivations for institutions

Under the influence of the globalized economy, “commodification of knowledge” (Bista, 2018, p. 50), “declining domestic enrollments and public disinvestment” (An, 2011, p. 22), and privatization of higher education, countries and educational institutions are motivated to recruit international students. Efficiency, accreditation, international competitiveness and privatization are proposed by Krishna Bista (2018) as the four primary reforms for universities in the age of globalization. These reforms are also related to universities’ promotion of their educational institution in other countries.

Efficiency. According to Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, with “the growing interest in international education” and the need to prepare students with intercultural competence, universities are responsible to educate students with strong global awareness, enhance national security and improve students’ employability (2014, p. 142). “Global learning” is used to describe universities or colleges with the goal to educate students with “global awareness, global citizenship, and global responsibility” (Hovland, 2009, p. 4). With more international students from different cultural backgrounds, the integration in global learning institutions

“reterritorialize” (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017, p. 49) the university and reestablish the orientations and social norms in the classroom. In other words, a culturally diversified post-secondary education environment helps to reach the goal of “holistic student development” (Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014, p. 143), preparing students for the global competition.

Accreditation. With the goal of cultivating the competitiveness and global competence of students, universities recruit international students to create opportunities for intercultural engagement. The intercultural environment trains students with the ethnic, cultural and global perspectives and international skills (Ching, Renes, McMorrow, Simpson & Strange, 2017; Su & Harrison, 2016; Song, 2016; Ruble & Zhang, 2013). Consequently, universities build an international reputation and “raise their international profile in volume, scope, and complexity” (Zhu, 2016, p. 4).

International competitiveness. After students are attracted to the host nation, university experiences function as a system to not only educate these international students but also transform them to “highly skilled knowledge workers” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 57) for the host nations. Foreign students and researchers contribute to nation-states “as part of a global competition for talent” (Geddie, 2010, p. 1). As an immigrant country, with the need for population growth, “Canada aims to attract 450,000 international students by 2022” (Bista, 2018, p. 54). Furthermore, during the new era for the exchange of international students that began after World War II, with the goal of improving national security (Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014), nation-states expect future citizens to understand the rest of the world better and “to maintain and even expand their sphere of influence” (Zhu, 2016, p. 4). Studying with international students is seen as a strategy to help the next generation understand other countries.

Additionally, with more Chinese international students in the host nations, the local Chinese communities are constantly engaging with new students, so educational institutions also build a better connection with the local Chinese communities (Ching et al., 2017).

Privatization. While foreign student's financial contribution to educational institutions was "long considered" (Geddie, 2010, p. 1), students are also seen as "overseas customers of education products" in the globalized education market (An, 2011, p. 22; Zhu, 2016, p. 19). Under the influence of the "privatization and decentralization of education" supported by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Bista, 2018, p. 50), students in post-secondary institutions contributed \$8.04 billion to the United States in the 2013-2014 academic year (Zhu, 2016, p. 19). In 2013, the United States benefited roughly \$27 billion from international students (Ching et al., 2017, p. 474).

China's participation. In the late 1970s, Chinese students studying in the United States were a central part of the government's policy to learn Western technologies (Yan & Berliner, 2013). As a result, the public perception of the United States shaped from a "decadent capitalist country to the land of gold and freedom" (Yan & Berliner, 2013, p. 62). After the State Council (guowuyuan 国务院) approved self-funded overseas education in 1984 (Zhu, 2016), the number of mainland overseas students in the United States increased to 20,030 in 1988 (Yan & Berliner, 2013, p. 62). As the volume of international students grew, Chinese students became the largest international student community in the United States, the UK, and Australia in the academic year 2015 to 2016 (Bista, 2018, p. 216).

2.1.3 Motivations for students

According to Bista (2018, p. 217), the “preservation factor”, which describes the disadvantages in the education environment at home country, and the “self-development factor”, referring to better educational and occupational opportunities over the globe, are two major factors motivating students to study abroad.

Preservation factors. Preservation factors describe motivations of escaping from the disadvantageous education in the home country, and Chinese students face one of the most competitive education systems. The the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), also known as Gaokao (高考), is the admission exam for universities in China (Zhu, 2016). This system has more challenging tests and criteria compared with similar systems in North America and Western Europe; as of 2013, the increased enrolment rate to universities was at 34.5% (Zhu, 2016, p. 10). Furthermore, even if high school graduates are admitted to a university, post-secondary education in China “is hierarchically ranked and diversified” (Zhu, 2016, p. 10). Project 211 was proposed to enhance the designated higher education institutions and key fields of studies, while Project 985 aims to build higher education institutions with global standards and international renown (Zhu, 2016). However, according to Zhu:

Given that only thirty-nine universities have been selected for Project 985, and 112 universities have been selected for Project 211 among 2542 colleges and universities in China, students must work exceedingly hard to be admitted to the leading Project 985 or Project 211 universities (2016, p. 11).

In addition to the competitiveness of the Chinese higher education system, Chinese education is known for its teacher-centred instruction methods that are oriented towards exams (Zhu, 2016, p. 11). Under the influence of globalized culture and economy in China, some students choose to

study abroad because they are seeking an education method with more openness and engagement (Ching et al., 2017; Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014).

Self-development factors. As globalized flows of information and ideology create images of “alternative lifestyles” (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 380), students choose to study abroad for “a search for self-fulfillment that goes beyond occupational status; an escape from social constraints back home; a desire for new lifestyles; and a wish for a cosmopolitan status” (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 380). Education abroad is argued to be an efficient way to train students with “action-oriented experiences” (Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014, p. 144) in a “real, unbuffered world” (p. 146). After learning to adapt to the unfamiliar cultural and social surroundings, this experience may cultivate the confidence and the capacity of independent thinking for international students (Ching et al., 2017). At the same time, being trained in international environments, students who show intercultural competence and linguistic competence have more advantages and opportunities to be employed in the home country, host nation and global market (An, 2011). While an international education background makes an impressive resume for job searching in Asia (Chen, 2017), people with low English competence are considered insufficient of “the proper sociocultural aptitude required for the globalizing world” (An, 2011, p. 24).

2.2 Cross-Cultural Experience

2.2.1 Acculturation

International students have to familiarize themselves with the local culture and adapt to the sociocultural environments of host nations. This requires that they operate within

intercultural communication environments. Intercultural communication is an interactive “symbolic exchange” process, in which people from two or more different cultures “negotiate shared meanings” (Yu, 2018, p. 6). As international students enter another culture, they must actively adjust themselves. Gudykunst and Moddefine refer to intercultural communication as “face-to-face communication between people from different national cultures” (as cited in Salven, 2017, p. 23). Various terms have been used to describe the experience of fitting into host nations: adaptation is used mainly in biological literature, adjustment is used in psychology, acculturation is commonly referred to in anthropology, thus to human communication (Zhu, 2016).

Acculturation is defined as “the process of culture change and adaptation that occurs” (Yu, 2018, p. 9) when people encounter different cultures. As well, Salven defines acculturation as the process of interaction between “two autonomous cultural groups” (2017, p. 27). In addition, Pratt (2016) emphasizes the importance of language learning related to their degree of acculturation to the local group. Pratt believes that students who speak fluently in the local language adapt better in the host nation. On the other hand, Du and Wei (2015) propose that acculturation should be assessed based on three dimensions, including values, cultural traditions and social relationships. Moreover, according to Anderson’s model (1994), cross-cultural adaptation has six basic principles: “it involves adjustments; it implies learning; it implies a stranger-host relationship; it is cyclical, continuous, interactive; it is relative; it implies personal development” (p. 303). A recent study shows similarity to Anderson’s model as the authors suggest (Ching et al., 2017) that cultural adjustment is a never-ending process for both the international students and the local community.

During the time international students reside in a foreign country, they experience acculturative adaptation due to the cultural transition. In the 1950s, cultural shock was originally defined as a “medical condition describing feelings of disorientation following the entry into a new culture, feelings often so strong as to degenerate into physical symptoms” (Anderson, 1994, p. 304). Yan and Berliner agree to this definition and argue that the absence of familiar “signs and symbols of social intercourse” (2013, p. 78) leads to cultural shock, which includes precipitated anxiety, feelings of rejection, confusion and surprise as well as a sense of loss. Recent scholars describe the psychological barriers in language learning and education during acculturation with “language culture shock” (Pratt, 2016, p. 10) and “academic culture shock” (p. 8). Similarly, Rui and Wang (2015) proposed an Anxiety/Uncertainty Model to distinguish between different challenges for international students. Based on this model, after relocating to host nations, international students experience “uncertainty about behaviours and values embodied by” people from the local society, and they experience “anxiety” when they communicate with local people (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401). With that said, obstacles for international students can influence various aspects of their sojourn.

2.2.2 Obstacles in acculturation

Language deficiency is mentioned in most literature as a major challenge for overseas students who speak English as a second language, and studies show that language deficiency negatively affects students’ academic performance, social relationships, adaptation to the local environment and psychological wellness (Ching et al., 2017; Pratt, 2016; Salven, 2017; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014; Yeo, Mendenhall, Harwood & Hunt, 2019; Zhu, 2016). Some international students hold a misguided attitude that they should learn English in China before

they go abroad, but language test scores in China may not fully and accurately reflect students' actual language ability due to the tests' emphasis on grammar rather than practical uses of language (Pratt, 2016; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014). As a result, students with low language skills struggle in lectures, taking notes and class participation (Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014). At the same time, certain programs or disciplines are highly popular among Chinese students, leading to a high density of Chinese population in class (Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014), in which they have less opportunity to practice communicating in English. Some scholars argue that the language deficiency of international students causes a low level of confidence, discrimination and other mental issues, which deteriorate their intercultural adaptation process (Ching et al., 2017; Pratt, 2016; Yeo et al., 2019).

According to Anderson (1994), obstacles in cross-cultural experience are subdivided into three types: 1) differences in culture, beliefs and core values, 2) the lack of cultural objects that define people's former identity, and 3) the new social environment. Cultural differences can vary from political opinions, "gaze and bodily contact, rules and conventions" (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616). Due to the lack of understanding of the culture of international students, host nationals might treat international students with "unfavourable stereotypes", ignoring their "specific social, cultural, and historical backgrounds" (Zhang & Beck, 2014, "Conclusion"). As part of the second obstacle, the lack of objects regarding international students' cultural identity, students also experience internal challenges, including "a condition of homesickness" (Anderson, 1994, p. 302), "stress, anxiety, lack of confidence, and isolation" (Poteet & Gomez, 2015, p. 84).

As international students lose support from their former social network and culture, they also experience difficulties in building new social networks in host nations. Many scholars have

reported that international students' relationships with host nationals are in general superficial (Pratt, 2016; Zhu, 2016), and they are described as "Hi-bye friends" (Zhu, 2016, p. 54) for the lack of in-depth connection. A study on international students in the UK indicates their challenge to know UK students, while "70 percent of international Japanese students regarded their compatriots as their 'first three closest persons' in the UK" (Zhu, 2016, p. 55). This tendency is caused by not only the language barrier but also by the different understandings of friendship among host nationals and international students.

Based on Anderson's model (1994, p. 304), "social incompetence" describes the communicative and behavioural differences between international students' host culture and home country. Aside from international students' language deficiency, Pratt (2016) and Yan and Berliner (2013) suggest that students still have trouble communicating with local students because academic language is different from conversational languages, such as idioms and slang. Moreover, the implicit rules of social engagement reflect cultural differences between Western and Chinese culture (Pratt, 2016; Yan & Berliner, 2013). In Chinese culture, friends are not only people who do special things for each other, but they are also reliable networks in need of help, so friends are supposed to "know each other's business" (Yan & Berliner, 2013, p. 72). On the contrary, local students in Western countries emphasize privacy, and their politeness makes international students feel distanced (Yan & Berliner, 2013).

2.2.3 Acculturative adjustment

Based on research that studied American students in Paris, Pitts argues that "the overseas studying experience of these students challenged their cultural identity and also enhanced their sense of self at the same time" (as cited in Yu, 2018, p. 26). Hence, students experience

adjustments in identity and communication styles in order to “gain more understanding” and to cooperate with local people efficiently (Yu, 2018, p. 26).

Acculturative adjustment is usually divided into sociocultural and psychological adaptations. Because international students are challenged by their “lack of understanding of host culture” (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401), during the cross-cultural adaptation, they learn “new cultural knowledge, acquire new skills” (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401) and “negotiate interactive aspects of the host environment” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 615). In other words, sociocultural adaptation is the process of fitting into the local environment by developing an understanding of the host culture and the local environment (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401). Specifically, Spencer-Oatey and Xiong suggest (2006, p. 38) that sociocultural adaptation includes the “general adjustment” to manage daily life, the “interaction adjustment” to communicate with host nationals, and the “work adjustment” or “academic adjustment” in familiarizing work-related and academic objectives. Furthermore, psychological adaptation is an internal and mental adjustment. Psychological concerns of international students usually operationalize as depression, “feelings of worthlessness, loneliness” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 615) and other symptoms. Psychological adaptation is defined as “general well-being or emotional satisfaction”, and it is also the process of coping with “acculturative stress” (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401).

When sociocultural and psychological obstacles challenge international students, “social interaction with host nationals” can facilitate their sociocultural adjustment, whereas “social connectedness” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616) help them cope with the internal psychological challenges. Since sociocultural challenges are mainly situational and external, “social interaction with host nationals provides opportunities for international students to learn

different communication patterns first hand (through observation, practice, receiving feedback)” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616). Through social activities such as playing sports, cooperating in schoolwork or having dinner with host nationals, international students can learn different aspects of the social and cultural environment of the host nation (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616).

At the same time, social support is suggested as a method to “alleviate acculturative stress and facilitate cross-cultural adaptation” (Rui & Wang, 2015, p. 401). Social connectedness is defined as “the subjective awareness of being in close relationship with the social world” and “an internal sense of belonging to that world” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616). The “interpersonal closeness” is an internalized relationship between international students and host nationals and host nations as a result of the development of a “sense of connectedness” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616). Social connectedness acts as guidance for “feelings, thoughts and behaviours”, it helps people to “feel comfortable and confident in the larger social context” (Zhang & Goodson, 2011, p. 616).

2.3 Identity Construction and Negotiation

2.3.1 Define identity

Identity is a difficult notion to define. Nonetheless, many researchers agree that human identity is “rooted in language” and does help to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence ‘what’s what’)” (Yu, 2018, p. 11). As one of the layers that influence one’s identity, “the ideological self” indicates “broader cultural and historical meanings in a particular social situation (e.g., husband, wife)” (Yu, 2018, p. 11). Similarly, Fang and Duff define identity as “how a person understands

his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (2018, p. 44). In James E. Côté’s study on the link between culture and identity, he argues (1996) that personal identity is shaped by the actual living experience of each person. On the other hand, Abrams and Hogg believe:

Social identity contains social identifications: identity-contingent self-descriptions deriving from membership in social categories (nationality, sex, race, occupation, sports teams, and more short-lived and transient group memberships). Personal identity contains personal identifications: self-descriptions which are ‘more personal in nature and that usually denote specific attributes of the individual’ (1998, p. 22)

From similar perspectives, identity is defined as “common identification with a collectivity or social category” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 284). Hence, the social identity theory accentuates the influence of social structures on the formation of self and the impact of self on social behaviours.

2.3.2 Identity formation

There is a general belief that the construction of identity is linked to culture and language (Côté, 1996; Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013; Moore, 1995). For example, the theories of articulation and discourse analysis allow scholars to “address the interlacing of the material symbolic where one is already the other, both produced by and productive of the social order” (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 6). Rather than seeing language as solely “a linguistic system of signs and symbols”, Julia Danielle Salven considers language as “a complex practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated, and resisted” (2017, p. 46). Similarly, Côté believes (1996, p. 420) that people are constantly observing the social environment so their “consumption

patterns”, or behaviour and appearance, conform to whatever standards that are accepted at the time and place. Indeed, as a representational system, language allows people to embody social thoughts and concepts into signs and symbols, and to transmit and meaningfully interpret them (Hall, 1997). Therefore, the construction of identity is a “dynamic and ongoing process” (Fang & Duff, 2018, p. 44), in which people engage with cultural productions and interactions. Internally, people identify themselves with “beliefs about language” (Fang & Duff, 2018, p. 39) and culture, whether they are shared by the community or not; externally, people are influenced by how society and other “position” (Fang & Duff, 2018, p. 39) them in different social contexts. Hence, identity is not a fixed entity, it can be negotiated through “social mobility” (Yu, 2018, p. 13).

Nevertheless, the social identity theory emphasizes the process of social categorization, which refers to “the ordering of social environment in terms of social categories, that is of groupings of persons in a manner which is meaningful to the subject” (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). As individuals discover their own places in society, these socially defined categories become their reality (Tajfel, 1974). With this theory, society is seen as “a heterogeneous collection of social categories” (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p. 17), which represents power relations between different social groups and the dynamics of the economy and history. The process of social categorization leads to an accentuation effect on “similarities between objects within the same category and differences between stimuli in different categories” (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p. 18). As a result, people create self-stereotypes by categorizing themselves and accentuating the similarities with group members and differences with others (Abrams & Hogg, 1998).

Tajfel’s social identity theory (as cited in Yu, 2018, p. 13) suggests that, if new group memberships contribute to “creating a positive social identity”, people will choose to leave the

former group. Identity negotiation is thus defined as a “transactional interaction process whereby individuals in an intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and support their own and other’s desired self-images” (as cited in Yu, 2018, p. 23). In Drzewiecka and Steyn’s research on racial immigrants, they use “incorporation” (2012, p. 2) to understand immigrants’ change of identity. Incorporation describes the articulation in which “meanings and material elements interlink to shape claims to belonging, and alignments and commitments to whiteness” (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 2). Since articulation is “a mode of combination of various instances from the economic, ideological, and political realms” (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 6), the negotiation or incorporation of identity in host nations can be impacted by different aspects.

2.3.3 Identity negotiation

To adapt to the environment of host nations is to negotiate one’s identity between host culture and their root culture. For example, in the United States, racialized immigrants have to “prove their value to the nation in order to be integrated or accepted by the dominant culture” (Holling & Moon, 2015, p. 83). The concept of incorporation also emphasizes the “alignments and commitments to whiteness” (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 2; Yeo et al., 2019, p. 60). Drzewiecka and Steyn argue (2012, p. 4) that immigrants are “conditionally and forcefully shaped” in the workplace or in their struggle for citizenship. Assimilation, the adaptation toward host culture (Yu, 2018, p. 10), is seen as a process of “racial whitening” (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 4). During this process, immigrants negotiate their identities through engagement with “material situations such as work, leisure” and so on of local society (Drzewiecka & Steyn, 2012, p. 4). Similar to the pressure for racialized immigrants to prove themselves, international

students are shaped by the expectations from the education system. As a result, they negotiate a new identity of “test takers”, which “reflect their success or failure” (Zhang & Beck, 2014, “Conclusion”). For both international students and immigrants, identity negotiation in cross-cultural adaptation can be categorized into four different moments.

These four moments of acculturative adjustment resonate with the four methods of decoding proposed by Stuart Hall (2018). Firstly, to accept the dominant code is to decode the message the same way it has been coded (Hall, 2018). In like manner, in the process of acculturation, assimilation is to give up international students’ original culture and to “embrace the host culture” (Yu, 2018, p. 10). If adapting to the host culture is to accept the dominant code, the professional code is “relatively independent of the dominant code” (Hall, 2018, p. 272), so it is similar to the “integration” adjustment (Yu, 2018, p. 10). That is to say, as international students adapt to the local culture, they still retain their traditional culture. Moreover, Stuart Hall defines the negotiated code as “a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements” (2018, p. 273). In the process of acculturative adjustment, international students can choose to only remain their heritage culture, which is known as the “separation” (Yu, 2018, p. 10) in acculturation. As “oppositional code” refers to decoding the message “in a globally contrary way” (Hall, 2018, p. 274), it resonates with “marginalization” (Yu, 2018, p. 10) in acculturation. With this option of acculturation, international students distance themselves from both host nations’ culture and the culture of their home country.

2.3.4 Some dominant articulations of Chinese identity

Confucianism acts as “the main narrator” (Solé-Farràs, 2014, p. 2) of the formation of Chinese culture and identity with its philosophical and ideological discourse. Various scholars

argue that the Chinese culture, cultural identity, psychological structure, as well as philosophy and religions have been developed around the ideologies of Confucianism (Han, 2013; Link, 2015; Solé-Farràs, 2014). According to Solé-Farràs (2014), Confucianism is a discursive system for the convergence and development of Chinese civilization, which becomes the centre of the cultural identity of the Chinese state. From the awakening of a Chinese “national cultural consciousness” (Solé-Farràs, 2014, p. 81) to modern Chinese society, the ideologies sheltered by Confucianism have largely remained unchallenged (Link, 2015). At the same time, Mandarin is added to the “the process of signification” (Han, 2013, p. 39), and cultural products and mass communication all conform to this Han Chinese language. In general, to be Chinese, people are required to behave in a proper manner and be a part of this civilization (Link, 2015).

Confucianism. With “benevolence (ren 仁)” as the centre of his ideology, Confucius constructed an organic “cultural-psychological structure” with the ability to absorb and repel external influences to elongate its life (Solé-Farràs, 2014, p. 23). Confucianism advocates authoritarian and hierarchical disciplines within a family, which constitutes the basic unit of the Chinese social hierarchy system (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017). According to Link, traditional family values under the influence of Confucianism are ethical and hierarchical: “A father had authority over a son, and the son was bound to obey. But the father was bound, too: he had to be a proper father, treating his son as a father should, and could be held up to public scorn if he did not” (2015, “Old School”). Since family functioned as the basic unit of education, this collectivism-oriented system is extended to the whole society for the maintenance of an interdependent and interpersonal harmony (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017).

As a result, loyalty, power distance and self-control are three features of the Chinese civilization and culture (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017). First of all, citizens are required to “pay loyalty and duty to the sovereign” (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017, p. 133), usually the elder in the family or the authority. Then, as men are required to be a true gentleman by master skills of “Shi (诗, poetry), Shu (书, books), Li (礼, rituals), and Yue (乐, music)” (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017, p. 131), women are obligated to be “submissive” (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017, p. 133) to their husbands. As a result, Chinese society maintains harmony with “excessive power distance” and “rigid rules” at the cost of “flexibility and professionalism” (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017, p. 132). Members of Chinese society are encouraged to behave accordingly and control their desires (Fan, Zhang & Wang, 2017).

Functioning as the centre of the Chinese way of life, Confucianism has been a convergence of various values and has evolved throughout Chinese history. In the pre-modern Chinese society, people think, behave and live in accordance with “heaven sanctioned principles” (Link, 2015, para. 1). Similar concepts have been preserved into the Confucianism values, leading to “remarkable expansion of the semantic field for this term” (Solé-Farràs, 2014, p. 10). Since Confucian tradition values other civilizations as “barbarian people” (Han, 2013, p. 28), when Mongols and Manchu invaders swept in and built their empires of the Yuan Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty, they adapted to the Chinese tradition to civilize themselves as the legitimate rulers of China. Nowadays, fifty-six ethnic groups are living in China, with the Han Chinese majority taking roughly 92% of the population (Han, 2013, p. 24). Confucian tradition has been adapted to the political system for the construction of a harmonious Chinese state.

From nationalism to the Chinese dream. According to Solé-Farràs (2014), Sun Yat-sen once advocated uniting the Chinese nation with Chinese nationalism (minzu zhuyi 民族主义), which is constituted with consanguinity, living conditions, language and religion of Chinese culture. Sun believes that Chinese nationalism, placing “Chinese culture in a superior position” (Solé-Farràs, 2014, p. 80), could defend China from the adaptation of Western culture, science and political system. Even though Maoism advocated to learn foreign culture rather than traditional culture for the development of China, cultural traditions, including Confucianism values, are supported by the contemporary Chinese government (Fraiberg, Wang & You, 2017; Link, 2015; Solé-Farràs, 2014). The slogan of the Communist Party, “constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Fraiberg, Wang & You, 2017, p. 176), accentuates the importance of national strength and harmony as the means to world peace and justice. The vision of building a harmonious socialist society (社会主义和谐社会) and president Xi Jinping’s “Chinese dream” both show similarity with Confucianism (Fraiberg, Wang & You, 2017; Link, 2015). In addition to the shared emphasis on “harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural world” (Fraiberg, Wang & You, 2017), the Chinese dream emphasizes the national pride and the love of not only China but also the Communist Party, showing similarities with the Confucian value of loyalty and patriotism (Link, 2015).

2.3.5 Some dominant articulations of Canadian identity

Multiculturalism in Canada functions as a national policy, a “demographic fact” and an ideology to maintain the diversity of the country (Berry, 2013, p. 664). As Canada absorbs immigrants from various countries and cultivates a diversified cultural and ethnic environment,

Canadian identity is also constituted with the emphasis of “cultural freedom and one’s own individual identity” (Mann, 2012, p. 491).

Define multiculturalism. The notion of multiculturalism has multiple conceptualizations. By resembling the ancient tale of “the pachyderm in a dark room”, Fethi Mansouri and Boulou Ebanda de B’béri argue that, even though people, especially political leaders, use the same term multiculturalism, they produce “different meanings relating to so-called multiculturalism” (2014, p. 2). Multiculturalism values ethnocultural pluralism and liberal-democracy in constructing a shared community of national and cultural minorities (Golić, Vujadinović & Šabić, 2016). It not only seeks to construct a harmonious society based on the “acceptance, tolerance and coexistence” (Golić, Vujadinović & Šabić, 2016, p. 276) of various cultures but also advocates for equitable social participation for each cultural community (Berry, 2013). Along with the coexistence of different cultural heritages and identities, all cultural groups are supported to participate in Canadian society and cooperate with other groups (Berry, 2013). Moreover, multiculturalism in Canada encourages intercultural communication with the use of official languages, which reduce the barriers of participation in Canadian society (Berry, 2013).

The history of multiculturalism could be traced back to the late 1960s when Canada was home to a diversified population, including English-speaking Canadians, French-Canadians and more than 50 other Aboriginal cultural groups (Berry, 2013; Mann, 2012). The multicultural policy was introduced in 1971 with the goal of improving “the quality of intercultural relations” (Berry, 2013, p. 663). Instead of remaining the “Whiteness” or English-speaking British culture as the centre of Canadian self-identification, Canada gradually constructed new and unique

national symbols, such as the Maple Leaf flag, to reflect the multiracial society (Mann, 2012). In 1988, the Multiculturalism Act was published to recognize the fundamental position of multiculturalism in constructing not only the Canadian heritage and identity but also a future for the country (Berry, 2013).

Although some concern that “granting special rights to minority groups and extending privileges to marginalized populations promote a hierarchy of rights, based in part on group rights” (Li, 2003, p. 2), scholars believe that the recognition of differences and cultural diversity protects equality in society (Berry, 2013; Li, 2003; Moore, 1995). Similarly, Moore (1995, p. 297) stresses that “the recognition of the cultural and philosophical diversity of contemporary societies” is the basis of a liberal state. At the same time, individual values and cultural differences are encouraged because multiculturalism and liberalism both justify the consensus of conflicting and even irreconcilable ideologies (Berry, 2013; Moore, 1995).

As a result, according to Golić, Vujadinović and Šabić, “Canada has one of the world’s most admired models of a multicultural society” (2016, p. 284). While the increasingly diversified Canadian citizens are living in “relative harmony”, multiculturalism is considered as being accepted by 84% of Canadians (Golić, Vujadinović & Šabić, 2016, p. 284). Currently, 6.2 million Canadians, which constitutes 20% of the population gross, are immigrants from 200 countries and speaking 95 different languages (Berry, 2013, p. 663). To put it in another way, multiculturalism has been largely favoured by most Canadians and realized through the diversified environment as the unique identity of Canada.

2.4 Cosmopolitanism

As foreign students negotiate their identity in the host nations, universities also train them with cosmopolitan values, skills and competencies. Eunike Piwoni argues that education systems over the globe play a key role in “legitimizing cosmopolitanism as an ideal to strive for” (2018, p. 1). Indeed, university curriculum values “the notions of human rights and humanity” (Piwoni, 2018, p. 1), and they train students with cosmopolitan skills and competencies for their success in a global economy. As international students go through the unsettling phase of cross-cultural experience, they are also likely to adopt values of cosmopolitanism and examine their new life goals with it (Piwoni, 2018, p. 1).

2.4.1 Define cosmopolitanism

The ideology of cosmopolitanism can be traced back to ancient Greece. The original definition of a cosmopolitan was “a citizen of the world” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 53). The initial moral value of cosmopolitanism, which originates from the Cynics, advocates for an outward-looking approach to extend beyond the boundary of cities or states (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 15). Similar to multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism has been differently defined by various scholars throughout history, but its core value is still driven by the consideration of not only the “immediate circle of self, family or even the polis” but also the imagined community constructed by all human beings over the globe (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 15). Cosmopolitanism is “associated with an intellectual and aesthetic sense of openness towards peoples, places and experiences from different cultures, especially those from different nations” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 53). Because of this openness towards the world, cosmopolitans

advocate for the willingness to change and consider other points of view. According to Fraiberg, Wang and You (2017, p. 172), cosmopolitanism is the openness to transnational and transcultural interactions with the “Others”. Delanty (2012, p. 31) as well believes that “cosmopolitanism must be understood in terms of their different orientations toward and uses of the cultural model which defines the goal state of the process – from open, reciprocal relations to an open, global, legally secured, cosmopolitan society”. Through competition and contestation, cosmopolitanism is a learning process in the form of communication and operation across different groups, cultures and civilizations (Delanty, 2012).

In the age of globalization, Matthews and Sidhu also argue (2005, p. 55) that scholars should neglect sovereignty and recognize a “collective identity” in an imagined community, a community that shares the same values of humanitarianism, respect, justice and non-violence. The world is suggested as an interconnected space, where political and cultural divisions created hierarchies in the “mode of belonging” (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 11). From an economic perspective, the world trade and its commercial interests are motivations for people from different countries and cultures to not only neglect the religious and cultural differences but also peacefully interact (Delanty, 2012, p. 19). Similar to Matthews and Sidhu’s argument, considering the complexity of the global social environment, cosmopolitanism theories proposed by Delanty (2012, p. 11) as well as Sobré-Denton and Bardhan (2013) also neglect the political nationality and focus on the moral, cultural, social and justice aspects.

As the globalized economy leads to the prevalence of cosmopolitanism, international students are prepared with some cosmopolitan values before they enter the host nations (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013). At the same time, led by Confucianism and the CCP’s vision,

Chinese culture shares similar attitudes with cosmopolitanism in terms of intercultural competence (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017). The Chinese dream advocates peaceful collaboration with other nations, the promotion of diverse Chinese cultures in the world and the development of a harmonious and democratic global sphere (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017). With the core value of openness and diversity, cosmopolitans also highlight the willingness to learn from cultural and linguistic others in order to “grow and change along with the shifting complexities of the world” (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 13). This is also one of the values that are educated in global learning.

2.4.2 Global learning

According to Kevin Hovland’s study on global learning, four essential personal outcomes of the study in a modern education system include “civic knowledge and engagement” at local and global levels, “intercultural knowledge and competence”, “ethical reasoning” and “skills for lifelong learning” (2009, p. 5). Because schools are considered as “a site of cultural production as well as social reproduction” (Delanty, 2012, p. 267), modern schools have the responsibility to train students with a cosmopolitan vision.

Global learning differs from traditional schooling with the promotion of experiential learning, which prepares students with not only knowledge but also real-world experiences (Bista, 2018; Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013). International students are exposed to real-world problems and experiences during their journey in host nations, they are forced to “apply their knowledge to real-world applications” (Bista, 2018, p. 101). Students from the global learning context are argued to be more independent, compared to their counterparts in the home country (Bista, 2018). Moreover, students have the opportunity to learn from their engagements with

“cultural Others”, reflect on their experience, and expand their “normalcy” to embrace values and multiple points of view (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 166). The tolerance towards cultural diversity leads to the education of intercultural competence emphasized in global learning institutions.

One of the outcomes of study abroad in a global learning institution is to “develop global, international and intercultural competencies” (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017, p. 172).

Cosmopolitan education teaches students to think about human races from a global perspective, beyond the local scale (Delanty, 2012, p. 270). As a result of the intercultural engagements with diversified colleagues in a global learning context, students develop an “intercultural sensitivity” and “world-mindedness” (Bista, 2018, p. 102). To put it another way, they are trained to appreciate cultural, racial and ethnic diversity, to understand issues in a global context as well as to work with people across linguistic and cultural boundaries (An, 2011, p. 23; Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017, p. 172).

Aside from the outward-oriented experiences and competences, the other two outcomes from global learning are self-reflective abilities. Sobré-Denton and Bardhan (2013, p. 149) believe that cosmopolitan education is necessary because when people ignore the rest of the world, they are also ignorant of themselves. Moreover, with a broadened vision, students have a strengthened ability of critical thinking, which helps them to critique racism and nationalism (An, 2011). With that said, according to Delanty (2012, p. 273), “education has uniformly become ‘a means for human beings to cope with change and act as responsible citizens’”. As students switch between different perspectives, they are taught with a vision that emphasizes humanity and social justice (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013).

Last but not least, global learning trains students with the skills of a lifelong learner. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, “child-as-future-citizen” in the United States is educated to be lifelong learners (Delanty, 2012, p. 271). Along with the tolerance to cultural diversity, cosmopolitan pedagogy also promotes “self-reflexivity” (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 166) during intercultural engagements. In *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies* (2012), Delanty argues that cosmopolitanism in education cultivates students with “self-responsibility in making choices, problem solves, works collaboratively, and continually innovates” (p. 271). Moreover, from the governmental perspective, the cosmopolitan pedagogy aims to develop civic order and stable society by cultivating global citizens with values of self-responsibility and self-control (Delanty, 2012).

2.4.3 Global citizen

Along with an education system of global learning, cosmopolitanism has been constructed as “a corollary of globalization, raising the spectre and possibility of global citizenship” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 54). As people relocate to a foreign country and encounter new cultural, academic and social contexts, their consciousness is expanded to “across boundaries of nation-states” (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 383). In addition, global citizens are seen by Kant as a means to achieve peace (as cited in Delanty, 2012). Motivated by the development of culture, economy, knowledge and morality, humankind is moving toward the development of cosmopolitical rights, or “the rights of the citizens of the world” (Delanty, 2012, p. 295). Three main factors that are used to define global citizenship include social responsibility, global awareness and civic engagement (An, 2011; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014). In Eunike Piwoni’s (2018) analysis, one of the participants expresses his belief in the

advantages of diversity, open-mindedness and justice. Likewise, another participant demonstrates a new way of understanding “her place in the world” (Piwoni, 2018, p. 8). Cosmopolitanism also impacts a participant in terms of how she models her ambitions and lives her life (Piwoni, 2018).

Other scholars complement the definition of global citizens with the mobility to switch between different identities. For international students and immigrants in a cross-cultural environment, their identities are no longer limited by space (Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p. 58). Identity, especially the sense of belongingness, is usually constructed based on “spatial practices” (Christensen & Jansson, 2015, p. 89). However, with the Internet and an imagined online belongingness, some scholars believe the cosmopolitan theory is “associated with rootlessness and abstraction from particular local and cultural belonging” (p. 89). Similarly, Sobré-Denton and Bardhan argue that “identities, loyalties and self-understandings” of cosmopolitans “have no clear direction” (2013, p. 62). With an openness to cultural diversity and the competence of intercultural communication, cosmopolitans are able to hermeneutically switch between different contexts and “concrete life worlds of others” (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013, p. 62).

2.4.4 Post-graduation settlement

However, as the cross-cultural experience enriches students with cosmopolitan values, nationalism is also enhanced when their original values and culture are challenged. As international students immerse themselves in a drastically different context, they learn to appreciate different “cultural and national perspectives” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 60). Consequently, their intercultural experiences “reinforce their ethnocultural and national tastes

and sensibilities” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 60). Although the phrase “flexible citizens” is proposed to describe Chinese immigrants, international students also show its definitive quality as they “position themselves to maximize advantages under circumstances where choices constitute and straddle economic, national and geopolitical power dynamics” (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005, p. 60). As a result, international students usually experience uncertainty in post-graduation settlement.

According to the report on the post-secondary experience of study permit holders (Frenette, Lu, & Chan, 2019, p. 5), six years after graduating from a Canadian post-secondary institution, only one-third of overseas students stayed and worked in Canada. In Zhu’s analysis (2016) of learning environments in the United States, he argues that labour markets in China, the talent-absorbing environment in the United States, the condition of the global economy, and the status of economic, scientific and technological development in China are four critical factors that impact students’ willingness to return.

In a recent study on Chinese international students in Canada, Huimin Chen argues (2017, p. 80) that the need to balance familial responsibilities and difficulty in searching for a job in the Canadian job market are two critical aspects that influence their future decisions. Aside from the influence of traditional values, in comparison to political and sociocultural factors, academic (or occupational) and economic factors are argued to be more critical on a student’s intention to return (Zhu, 2016). The labour market in host nations is a critical factor that discourages international students to remain in host nations. Since international students are less likely to combine school and work, along with their disadvantage of linguistic competence compared to local students, international students experience difficulty in job hunting in Canada

in the field of their specialization (Bista, 2018). Furthermore, the report conducted by Frenette, Lu, and Chan (2019) indicates the inferior position for former international students in the labour market. Even though former international students are making slightly more than local graduates after graduation, six years after graduation, they earn less than Canadians who are from similar demographics and educational backgrounds (Frenette, Lu, & Chan, 2019).

Students choose to not return mainly due to the occupational conditions in China and the cultivated belongingness to host nations (Zhu, 2016; Poteet & Gomez, 2015). Since certain industries in China follow different systems than Western countries, some returned graduates reported complaints about the underdeveloped academic environment in China, especially about the bureaucracies of school administration, the lack of transparency in the funding system, and “complicated interpersonal relationships in the universities” (Zhu, 2016, p. 74). Other researchers studied the belongingness of international students in the local Canadian community. Poteet and Gomez suggest (2015, p. 96) that international students feel belonging to the Canadian community if they made friends with Canadians. Similar to the belongingness to the host community, returned graduates, or “overseas returnees” (Qian, 2015, p. 89), also experience “reverse cultural shock” and “re-adaptation” (Zhu, 2016, p. 73) to the Chinese cultural and social environment, as a result of their negotiated identity influenced by global learning.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

To answer the research questions, two theoretical models helped to define and measure the acculturation and identity negotiation of respondents. “Model of acculturation” (Wang et al., 2012, p. 425) studies “the role of pre-arrival and post-arrival factors that might affect the

adjustment process” of international students. An example of pre-arrival factors would be “personality variables such as maladaptive perfectionism” (Wang et al., 2012, p. 425), whereas post-arrival factors include the “length of time in the new culture, perceived stressors, coping, and social support” (Wang et al., 2012, p. 425). However, this model only focuses on the psychological distress of the international student.

For the purpose of this research, the model of acculturation will be extended with the definition of cosmopolitanism and the “process of integration” (Poteet & Gomez, 2015, p. 84). The process of integration illustrates the contextual factors that influence the acculturative adjustment outcome. That is to say, the updated model will also analyze “the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity in the population”, such as the number of international students in the host community, and “social relations and interactions with domestic and other international students” as well as “interactions with professors and the social dynamics in class” (Poteet & Gomez, 2015, p. 85). As a result, the updated model of acculturation will evaluate pre-arrival factors, including international students’ understanding of cosmopolitanism and initial goals of their journey in Canada, and post-arrival factors, including “the host community as well as the university setting” (Poteet & Gomez, 2015, p. 84).

The outcome of respondents’ practices of identity is analyzed by categorizing them into four options of acculturation (Yu, 2018, p. 10). According to this model, sojourners can choose from four different ways of acculturative adjustment: “assimilation”, choosing the host culture over their own culture; “integration”, remaining both cultures; “separation”, maintaining only their heritage culture; and “marginalization”, discarding both cultures (Yu, 2018, p. 10). Since cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism differently promote “openness to new experiences”

(Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 383) without abandoning traditional cultural heritage, the notion of integration also represents potential cosmopolitan identity.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

To answer the research questions, this thesis adopts a qualitative research method. Participants were categorized as Category 1, students who stayed in Canada, Category 2, students who returned to China after graduation, and Category 3, students who relocated to another country after a post-graduation settlement to China. Through semi-structured interviews with at least 8 Chinese international students from each of the first two target groups as well as at least 1 student of Category 3, the research method connected the academic theories with current living contexts and experiences of Chinese international students. Nevertheless, some quantitative data and research methods were also adapted in the analysis and discussion of the research result. Hence, the research method used in this study is not exclusively a philosophical approach, in spite of its goal of contributing qualitative and empirical data to the field. With a sample of 17 participants, this research would be more likely to reflect four types of acculturation choices, which include marginalization, integration, separation and assimilation.

Since the research objective requires to collect empirical experiences of Chinese international students, qualitative research and interviews are suitable methods adopted for this thesis. A qualitative research method is usually mobilized to provide “an in-depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of their textual interpretation” (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87). Adopting qualitative research allows the researcher to explore the topic from an in-depth perspective. Although unstructured interviews would have provided a better environment for the interviewees to “express in their own ways and pace, with a minimal hold on respondents’

responses” (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87), this research has too limited a timeframe to execute and analyze unstructured, open-ended interviews on multiple interviewees.

The semi-structured interviews commonly take 30 minutes to 1 hour for each interviewee, and the pre-set questions function to lead conversations, allowing more control by the researcher (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87). This research design allows the interviewer to be flexible during the interview and observe the interviewees while recording their answers. A semi-structured interview has pre-designed open-ended questions and allows an in-depth coverage of the issue (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87). The researcher received ethics approval by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Ottawa on January 17, 2020. From January 17, the researcher recruited 21 potential participants and interviewed the first 17 contacts who agreed on the condition of this research.

3.2 Research Target

Along with a qualitative methodology, the researcher also adopted a cohort analysis to observe and analyze Chinese international students who studied abroad after 2008. Cohort analysis is commonly used in “understanding social, cultural, and political change” across a period of time (Glenn, 2005b, para. 6). The term “cohort” (Glenn, 2005a, “Definitions”) refers to a group of people sharing common characteristics, or people “who experienced a particular event during a specified period of time” (Glenn, 2005a). Instead of studying the total population of Chinese international students, this study focuses on Chinese international students who relocated to another country after 2008.

In 2008, the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing showcased the result of the economic and technological development of China and branded China as “a global leader and world power” (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008, p. 348). By carefully designed exhibition of the combination between the “modern and cutting-edge” society and the “ancient cultural centre” (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008, p. 348), the 2008 Summer Olympic Games can be seen as a “political spectacle” to rebrand China as the “superpower in the making” (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008, p. 351). In the trend of globalization, this slogan “One World, One Dream” contributed to generating an image of China as a globalized country, enhancing people’s nationalist pride (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008, p. 340). Since the Economic Reforms starting in 1978, self-funded international education gradually became an affordable choice for more and more people (Zhang & Ma, 2014, para. 6). In 2009, the increasing rate of Chinese international students reached 27.53% (see Appendix A, p. 117), the highest record in around a decade (Zhongguo jiaoyu zaixian, n.d., para. 3). Therefore, this study mainly analyzes Chinese international students who studied in Canada after the 2008 Olympic Games.

3.3 Sampling

In order to find suitable interviewees that fit with the three post-graduation settlement statuses, a digital recruitment poster was disseminated on the researcher’s social media. The researcher is a Chinese national landed immigrant who came to Canada as an international student. Hence, the researcher used his social network on social media to disseminate the recruitment information. The snowball sampling method is commonly used to help researchers locate and access people from marginalized social groups (Cohen & Arieli, 2011, p. 426). In this

case, the participants would be Chinese international students who graduated from a Canadian university. Therefore, the researcher asked his friends, connections, and all participants to disseminate the poster on their social media as well. This recruitment method should help the researcher to locate former Chinese international students who fit with the three statuses of post-graduation settlement. The first 17 respondents who replied to the recruitment information would be recruited for interviews.

Due to the limited budget and time length of this research, the researcher had online or phone interviews with interviewees who live outside of Ottawa. Preset questions focused on the length of respondents' sojourns in Canada, the reasons for their sojourns, their sociocultural experiences in Canada, and their intentions of future settlement after graduation (see Appendix C, p. 121). As well, participants were encouraged to add more details and examples from their overseas journeys in order to enrich the depth of this thesis.

3.4 Research Procedure

Overall, 17 one-to-one semi-structured interviews with former Chinese international students were conducted. The length of the interviews ranged from 28 to 105 minutes. The 17 interviewees demonstrate 4 different types of acculturation and 4 choices of post-graduation settlement at the center of this research. Four of the interviewees chose to be interviewed in English, and 12 interviewees chose to be interviewed in Mandarin, which is the official language of the People's Republic of China. The last interviewee started the conversation in Mandarin automatically, so 13 interviews were in Chinese and were transcribed and translated to English by the researcher.

All interviewees were recruited via WeChat, in spite of the researcher's efforts in posting recruitment messages on other platforms. Following the snowball sampling method, the researcher posted the initial copy of the Chinese recruitment poster (see Appendix B on p. 118) on his WeChat Moment (a Twitter-style interactive function to share text, photos and more with WeChat followers) and asked his friends who studied in Canada to share the poster on their WeChat Moment. Both the English and Chinese recruitment posters were posted on the researcher's Facebook, his friends also shared the posters on their Facebook timeline. Later, the researcher also shared the poster on LinkedIn and Weibo, another popular mainstream social media website in China. Moreover, the researcher shared the poster on three of the largest Chinese based online forums in Canada. These websites usually serve as sources of information and interactive information platforms for public discussion. VanPeople.com is based in Vancouver, CFC (or comefromchina.com) is based in Ottawa, and York BBS is based in Toronto.

By February 15, 2020, all 17 participants were recruited through WeChat platforms. Even though the researcher asked each participant to share the recruitment poster, only 5 participants were recruited through participants' social network. Most participants, 11 out of 17 interviewees, were recruited by the researcher's friends or other connections. Moreover, in order to conduct research with higher replicability and avoid potential bias, the researcher did not recruit his personal friends during the first month after the research began. Considering the prevalence of the COVID-19 in China, only until February 15, which is 30 days after the research began, the researcher asked a friend to participate in this project as the last interviewee. More than half of the participants contacted the researcher after they saw the recruitment poster on WeChat

Moment. Two contacts reached out to the researcher after the 17th participant was interviewed. One contact was from Facebook, the other was from CFC.

All interviews and participants' informed consents for participation were voice recorded and saved in the researcher's computer. Most participants were interviewed via WeChat in a format of voice call because they all live outside of Ottawa, and only 1 participant was interviewed through text and voice messages on WeChat. The length of voice call interviews range from 28 to 100 minutes, and the message-based interview took 105 minutes. For the message-based interview, the participant chose this format because she preferred to think through before she replied to the researcher. The researcher sent interview questions via text messages, while she replied via voice messages to save time. Before the beginning of each interview, the consent form (see Appendix F, p. 127) was sent to each interviewee. The researcher also started each interview with an explanation on the risk and voluntary condition of their participation. Each participant gave the researcher an informal consent, recorded by applications on the researcher's phone or computer.

Although the experiences of most participants are in alignment with the research targets, Chinese international students who studied in Canada after 2008, two of the participants do not meet the description. Despite the initial goal of this research to target Chinese international students who studied in Canada after 2008, one of the participants came to Canada in 2007. This participant was under the assumption that she came to Canada in 2014 until the researcher asked more questions about her experience in Canada. Furthermore, one of the participants found out her permanent residency in Canada when she arrived, but she grew up in China and was consequently not aware of her change of residential status. For the purpose of this study, this

participant was considered as a Chinese international student because of her lack of knowledge about and experience in Canada.

3.5 Methodological Challenges

The recruitment process took longer than expected, and the limitation of the WeChat platform and the widespread of the COVID-19 disease in China were potentially the main reasons. During the initial recruitment process with Participant 5, the researcher was informed of the public pressure among Chinese citizens due to the encounter of the COVID-19 disease and the Chinese New Year. As the largest celebration of China, Chinese New Year is the longest annual holiday for citizens. Amid the usual complexity of the Chinese New Year, the COVID-19 was spread in China along with the festival due to the huge movement of the population around the country. Despite Participant 5 volunteering to participate in this research, she requested to postpone the interview until after the holiday because of the stress and sensitivity of the circumstance. Therefore, the COVID-19 could be one of the reasons for the difficulty in having a more inclusive sampling process.

During the first round of the recruitment, the researcher realized a restriction of WeChat Moment in terms of its nature of an exclusive and private media platform. For the protection of users' privacy, WeChat Moment is only visible to the user's followers. On January 20, during a consultation with Professor Boulou Ebanda de B'éri, the researcher advanced the recruitment method to implement a strategy to post a shorter recruitment poster (see Appendix B on p. 118) on more platforms. In order to conquer this limitation of WeChat, the researcher started a chat group and asked 5 of his friends to share the new poster to 3 or 5 friends and ask these friends to

do the same. This new method is to take full advantage of the snowball effect on WeChat.

However, the researcher received no reply from his friends in the chat group. Later, he contacted three close friends and asked them to implement this method. Two friends refused to implement the method because it would bother their friends, and no response has been received via the third friend, although they all shared the post on their WeChat Moment.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher follows the thematic analysis method used by Due, Zambrano, Chur-hansen, Turnbull and Niess (2015) to analyze the data. Data analysis requires the researcher to examine, code, and recombine information “to draw conclusions” (as cited in Shen, 2011, p. 46). Thematic analysis has been used in qualitative research as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to identify meanings from qualitative data (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 2). Scholars from various fields of social and health sciences often use this approach because it helps researchers to answer “realist-oriented questions” (Terry et al., 2017, p. 25). With the approach of thematic analysis, the researcher was able to “make sense of” and “locate meaning” in the data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012, p. 2). Identified themes, which are “units of meanings” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 3) the researcher observed in the data, could reflect “textual data” (Shen, 2011, p. 46) and contribute to answering the research questions.

The method used in this research is an “inductive approach to coding and theme development” (Terry et al., 2017, p. 5). Similar to what Due, Zambrano, Chur-hansen, Turnbull and Niess (2015) performed in their research, the researcher followed Braun and Clarke’s

approach and analyzed the data in four steps. In the first stage, the researcher carefully read through the interview transcripts in order to familiarize himself with the data. After highlighting the most important and repeated features from the transcripts, the researcher coded the highlighted content into specific categories and subcategories for the third stage. Finally, the researcher reviewed all the transcripts and created a map of themes and codes in order to layout their interrelations. Direct quotations and keywords were chosen from the transcripts to reflect participants' opinions and experiences (as cited in Shen, 2011, p. 47). The researcher conducted the interviews, implemented the coding procedure and reviewed all themes and codes to ensure rigour in the creation of a codebook.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Out of the 17 former Chinese international students who graduated from Canadian universities, more than half of them studied in Greater Vancouver or the Great Toronto area, and 5 of them studied in other cities. Five of the participants were male and 12 were female. The majority of them arrived in Canada after high school, 4 of them studied in high schools with a non-Chinese curriculum, and 4 of them studied in Canada after they obtained their university degrees in China. The length of their sojourn in Canada varies from a year and a half to 9 years. 10 out of 17 participants spent longer than 6 years in Canada, and only 2 participants lived in Canada for less than 3 years.

During the interviews, the researcher learnt that post-graduation settlement is more complicated than expected because participants' decisions change according to their post-graduation experiences. Among all interviewees, only 2 of them chose to go back to China as their initial post-graduation settlement, 9 interviewees stayed in Canada and the other 6 participants either went to another country for temporary stay or chose to travel between China and Canada. During the timeframe of the interviews, 9 out of 17 participants are currently living in Canada, and 8 of them are living in China. However, since Participant 2 has already confirmed a job position in China, although she is still studying in Canada for her Master's degree, China would be counted as her settlement decision. On the contrary, Participant 12 studied in Canada and then Australia, she is living in China temporarily until her application for Canadian permanent residency is processed. Therefore, Participant 12's settlement location would be Canada. Therefore, rather than continuing with the initial categorization, participants were

distinguished into three groups: long-term settlement plan in China, in Canada or in both Canada and China.

This chapter is divided into 4 themes to discuss (1) the cross-cultural experiences; (2) the identity negotiation; (3) the cosmopolitan education, and (4) the post-graduation settlement of participants (see Appendix E for the coding table, p. 124). Direct quotations from the interviews will be used to support the themes.

4.1 Cross-Cultural Experiences

In the first part of the interviews, participants were asked to share their pre-arrival knowledge and post-arrival experiences in Canada. The pre-arrival sub-themes include reasons for their sojourns in Canada and pre-arrival knowledge about Canada. Sub-themes of psychological factor, educational factor, cultural factor, career factor and others constitute the post-arrival factors of participants' cross-cultural experience in Canada.

4.1.1 Reasons to study in Canada

Among different types of reasons mentioned by all participants, the curiosity for intercultural experience and limitations of education in China are the most prominent reasons for their initial relocation to Canada, while future career, knowledge capital in Canada, the safer environment compared to other countries, some family or relationship related reasons, and the tendency to immigrate were also discussed during interviews.

Knowledge capital and career development. In terms of the advantage of Canadian universities, some participants believe that Canada has a more advanced education system. Participant 9 and her family attempted to apply for family immigration to Canada when she was

younger because her parents believe that Canadian education for her and her brother would be worth the investment. Even though they failed to finish the immigration process, she still came to Canada after high school. Participant 11 studied in Finance. He joined a dual degree program that allowed him to study in China for the first two years in university and study in Canada for the rest of his courses. By joining this program, he believes that he would be able to “learn the latest knowledge about the finance industry”. Additionally, some participants also argue that, compared with the US, admission for the university is easier in Canada. As a result of the comparatively easy admission and high-quality education system in Canada, many participants state that education experience in Canada makes a more impressive resume. Before Participant 6 came to Canada, she studied in the US as an exchange student. She chose Canada for her Master’s program because she expected this experience to be a “gold-plating [or du jin; 镀金]” process that increases her competitiveness in the job market.

Structure of Chinese education. China has one of the most competitive education systems in the world. Due to the limited number of top universities in China, many students fail the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). Some of them will be arranged into a university program that was not their first option, and others must spend another year studying for the next exam if they want to study in a Chinese university. As an example, Participant 13 lost her interest in university education even though she was admitted to a program: “I found myself, first of all, never thought to study in Advertising, so I had no interest or understanding of this program. Suddenly it happened, I had nothing to learn, so I was a little lost”.

The vital importance and competition of the NCEE cause a series of limitations in the education system in China, including high pressure for students and a spoon-feed style teaching

method. Because Participant 5 did not perform well in the entrance exam for high school, her family decided to prepare her for overseas study by enrolling her in an international high school. The school she went to was following a Canadian curriculum, which is also one of the factors that affected her decision to study in Canada. On the other hand, the hierarchy in the Chinese teaching method was part of the reasons why Participant 13 chose to study in Canada.

When I went to school, I felt that the teachers were particularly bureaucratic, so I didn't know what I was learning in class, and why I wanted to learn these things... I am now a very political person, but not when a particularly unitary value is instilled into me. This kind of one-sided value inculcation is not suitable for me, I find it too scripted.

In addition, Participant 13 also shares that dormitory life in China was another factor that motivated her to study abroad. The participant had an issue adapting to the collective lifestyle in the university dormitory with 5 other roommates. She felt her personality had to be hidden, and she had to "be more low-key in that kind of environment... to get along with people".

Family and relationship. Despite these factors being only mentioned by a few interviewees, some participants suggest that family support and family friends or boyfriend were reasons for their journey in Canada. Since Participant 1 was at a young age, her parents wanted her to study abroad. Even though she preferred to stay in China when she was younger, she decided to study in Canada after years of persuasion from her parents. Participant 1 believes that her mother wanted this experience for her because "[my mom] wanted to study abroad and to live abroad for a while, but maybe she didn't have the opportunity at that time, so she insisted that I must go abroad and see the world". Participant 12 decided to study in Canada when she was still in high school, but her ex-boyfriend was the only reason for her to make that decision.

On the other hand, family friends or relatives in Canada were mentioned by many interviewees as a reason for their decision of choosing Canada as the country for global learning. For instance, Participant 1 and her family chose Canada because they had family friends who live in Canada, and they felt safe knowing she would be taken care of here. This is also related to the social environment in Canada as another reason for participants' overseas education.

Safe and educative environment. Many participants chose Canada over other countries because of the comparatively safe and educative environment. Participant 1 mentions that one of her friends studied in the US in high school. Her parents had to transfer her to a Canadian school because “she might have learnt to smoke and drink alcohol there. Then, the schools in the US may not have the discipline to manage students”. Moreover, Participant 10 and Participant 14 both came to Canada because of the proximity to the US. However, they decided to study in Canada instead because Canada is a culturally diversified country showing inclusiveness to Chinese. Participant 17 also shares that he chose Canada over the US because “the US is not as peaceful as Canada... they always go to war with others”.

Intercultural curiosity and immigration. According to Participant 1, she realizes that Chinese international students differ from students from other countries because many Chinese chose to study in Canada for the possibility of immigration. At the beginning of her journey, Participant 1 chose to study in the Accounting program for immigration purposes. She argues that: “my parents wanted me to study in this major... [because] studying in Accounting leads to better opportunities for immigration”. At the same time, many interviewees discussed their curiosity towards foreign countries as their motivation to study in Canada. Participant 3 went to the UK after graduation, but she returned to Canada after she finished her degree in the UK. She

notes that she came to Canada to “know more people and this can reflect [help to build] myself, I don’t want to be ignorant”. As well, Participant 17 came to Canada because he wanted to “see the world”.

4.1.2 Pre-arrival knowledge about Canada

When participants were asked about their pre-arrival knowledge about Canada or Western society, 8 out of 17 participants claimed that they did not know much about other countries. For example, Participant 17 says that the only thing he knew about Western society was “how to eat steak”. Many participants only knew Western countries through media content, including TV shows, movies, news and online content. Participant 16 has been living in Canada for 8 years. He recalls that even though he does not remember the source of the information before he came to Canada, the Chinese Internet used to describe foreign countries as “paradises”, which perception of Western societies is also shared by other participants. However, this perception is questioned by his own experience in Canada.

On the contrary, some participants had some foreign teachers, coworkers or even overseas experiences ahead of their arrival in Canada. For example, Participant 5 studied in a Canadian curriculum in high school, where her teachers were native Canadians.

Therefore, they will tell us a lot about Canadian culture during class, including the differences between Canadian culture and American culture. ... Because I have a better understanding of Canadian habits, including the weather in Victoria, including the weather in BC, I chose my university based on my understanding of the local environment.

Similarly, Participant 10 worked with some foreign co-workers as an intern when he studied at a Chinese university. He claims that his co-workers helped him build some understanding of Western societies.

4.1.3 Intercultural adaptation experience

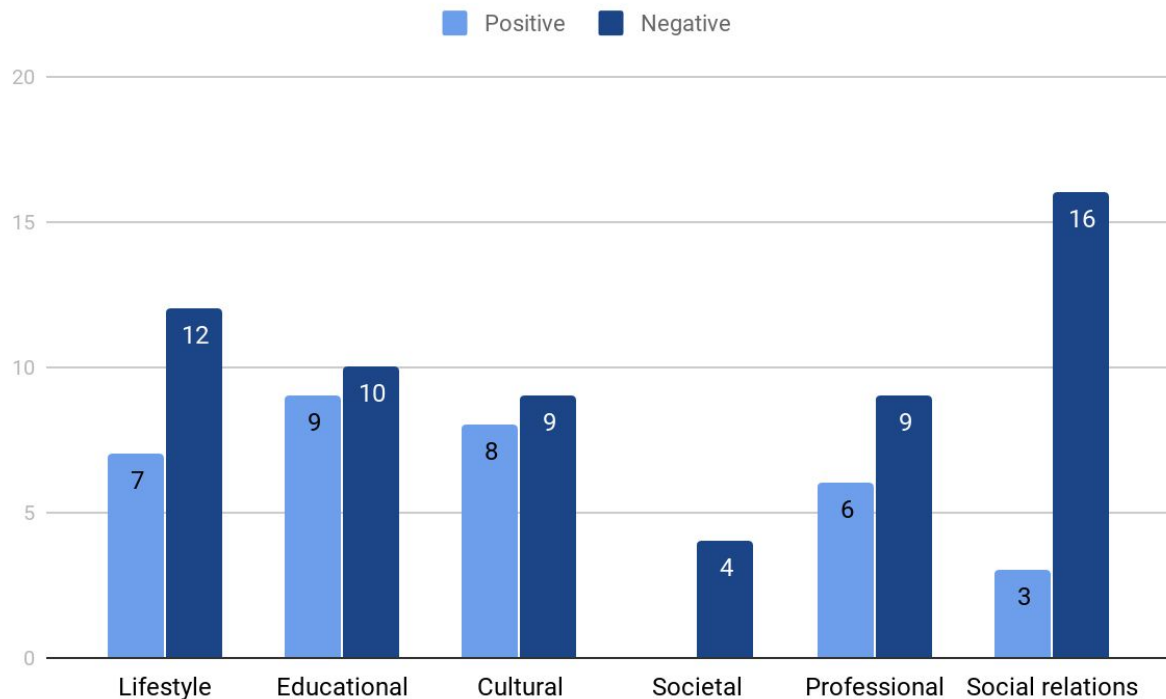


Chart 1. Participants' positive and negative experiences in Canada.

Lifestyle. One of the most discussed factors about the Canadian experience was the comparatively slow and underdeveloped urban lifestyle. More than one interviewee describes Canada or the city they lived in as “the village [or cun 村]”. According to Participant 16, It hasn't changed for 10 years. When I was in China, we knew China is a developing country, and the West [Canada] is a developed country, but in fact, in recent years, I feel that the Chinese living standard is far higher than the so-called developed countries.

Similarly, Participant 17 believes that China has a more convenient and efficient urban lifestyle with a better economy and high-speed rails. Participant 6 also suggests that, as a middle-class family, life is so much easier in China because of the cheaper human labour. In China, she spent 1000 Canadian dollars to hire a stay-at-home nanny, whereas the same service would cost 3000 to 4000 dollars in Canada. On the other hand, some interviewees prefer the Canadian lifestyle for its stable life quality and clean environment. Participant 6 argues that with the overall income of her household, “we have a townhouse in Vancouver and have our cars, and I think it is a comfortable life in Canada. It is the money you earn. You can buy a nice place to live, but in China, it is like... you can hardly afford a house in China”.

Education. During the interviews, many participants argued that they enjoy the diversified and less stressful Canadian education, in spite of some adjustment issues. Language was one of the major issues for most participants. While Participant 13 says that she chose to study in a Design program because it requires less communication with the clients, other participants also suffered in university because of their English grammar and writing skills.

According to Participant 7,

We had to write various business reports and produce a report as a group. I’m not a writer myself, and I have a lot of grammatical problems. Because this Business class is very strict, and people call it “the course designed to fail” [or shua ren ke 刷人课].

At the same time, the lack of understanding of the Canadian education system is another issue shared by many participants. Participant 13 studied in a Communication program but she initially wanted to study in a more creative program related to painting. However, she was not familiar with the application process for Canadian universities, and she was not sure if she could trust the

agency she hired, so she ended up studying in Communication because she met the language requirement for the program.

The sense of community at school is another setback for some participants. When Participant 2 was asked to discuss her education experience in Canada, she suggests that Canadian universities lack the sense of community compared to high school.

We would not have certain classes and certain classmates each semester, just like when you met a classmate, you probably would not see them anymore... It is a little hard for me to make friends when I just came here.

As well, Participant 17 says that he finished university by studying the class material on his own at home, and he barely talked to the professors. Additionally, the university is different from high school, especially in the class capacity. Therefore, even though Participant 5 was taught in a Canadian curriculum in high school, it still took her a semester to get used to the new system. Co-op program, or other internship opportunities, was discussed by many participants in the interviews. Participant 7 mentions that she thought it was not worthwhile to study in Canada after she failed to find a job in the co-op program. When local students planned ahead for internship opportunities, Participant 7 felt left behind because the international student identity limited her choices in finding a job. She was under pressure when she realized that she was not active enough in preparing for and participating in the co-op.

Culture. Although Canada is a diversified, inclusive and friendly country to most participants, some participants pointed out the subtle or overt discriminations and cultural shocks in their adaptation process. Most participants enjoyed the diversified culture, including food, people and inclusiveness, in Canada. As an example, even if Participant 14 was frustrated when

he landed in Canada because he felt lonely and isolated from the diversified local community, he gradually made friends with people from other countries and learnt to enjoy the various food and cultural options in Canada. However, some participants faced difficulties when they started working in Canada because of the diversified demand of the clients. As Participant 2 illustrates: “As [of] marketing ideas, you know, sometimes it’s hard to guess or to catch clients’ ideas, as we do have the differences in our backgrounds and cultures”.

Some participants encountered inappropriate jokes and stereotypes from local citizens. Participant 10 illustrates his experience working with local students in school projects, “Because some Chinese people may have poor oral English ability, so... sometimes they only write reports, and some Chinese people may deliberately choose some relatively simple parts to write. At the beginning of a project, some Canadians would intentionally distribute less labour for me, but I would think that it was not very reasonable.

Moreover, Participant 13 had a co-worker who posted inappropriate jokes on Chinese political issues: “I said to him, for example, I am concerned about a political thing recently, and he said, will this affect your social credit score?” She was also concerned because her manager thought people are overly serious. Instead of respecting or empathizing with people of another culture, Participant 13 believes that they only avoided inappropriate jokes because they do not want to take the blame.

On the other hand, the huge Chinese population in Canada is another adaptive setback in many interviewees’ cross-cultural experiences. Local Chinese citizens were the reason for Participant 13’s cultural shock in Canada when she initially arrived.

I did not expect so many Chinese in Vancouver. ...they don't think they are Chinese. ... They either identify themselves as Canadians, or they feel that they are not differentiated based on their skin colours. They are identified by their own cultural awareness and identity.

At the same time, some participants believe that people do not need to fit into the local society, or they could survive in Canada in a non-English environment. Due to the huge Chinese population on campus, Participant 14 argues that, with almost 90% of Chinese students in a class, it was hard for him to integrate into the local society.

Society. During the interview, the discussion on Canadian society focused on the sense of community, Canadian's sense of social responsibility, and the political actions of Chinese graduates in Canadian society. Conflicting opinions have been proposed on the sense of community in Canada. Some believe that Canada has a strong sense of community between strangers, while others suggest a feeling of not being involved in the local community. On the one hand, Participant 10 argues that, compared to Chinese, Canadians are more likely to appreciate their neighbourhood.

In the community, communication between a person and his neighbours, including some volunteer activities you do in the community, is very important to everyone. But in China, it will be completely different. Maybe people don't say hello to you now, or for example, they think community events have nothing to do with themselves.

On the other hand, Participant 3 believes that since many residents of Toronto are sojourners, the local community has limited representation. According to Participant 3, "because this is the city,

people travel a lot, people come and go, so lots of people do not really pay attention to the political events here, and they are less politically sensitive”.

In addition to the lack of political contribution of sojourners, the limited voice of Chinese in Canada was argued in some interviews as well. According to Participant 6, Chinese citizenship and properties in China are restrictions that prevent Chinese passport holders from participation in Canadian politics.

I think most of them are keeping their PR because ...being a citizen means you need to renounce your Chinese citizenship ...you cannot vote if you are not a citizen ... Most PRs are like me [not planning to become a Canadian citizen] because they want to go back to China someday, or they have some properties in China.

At the same time, when interviewees were asked about their identities in Canada, Participant 13 argues that international students in Canada are underrepresented despite that she hopes to be a part of the local community.

Furthermore, the strong sense of social responsibility was argued to be a Canadian or Western quality that some participants find hard to accept. When Participant 6 was asked about her opinion on the Canadian social environment, she shared a story about her failed attempt of participation in her neighbourhood. When the government announced plans to construct a modular housing for homeless women near her community centre, she attempted to speak against this decision with a Facebook page and printed posters. However, she was stopped by the huge volume of negative comments on the Internet and from her neighbours, even from her husband. In the meanwhile, she had many arguments with her Canadian husband because he makes regular donations to support elections. Participant 6 believes that Chinese people usually only

speak their voice when their personal interests are involved, but Canadians have a sense of social responsibility. As well, Participant 6, Participant 12 and Participant 17 are against this strong sense of social responsibility, more specifically the refugee policy. They argued that some Canadians have a self-righteous responsibility [or sheng mu xin 圣母心]. The refugee policy is seen as an unfair policy, according to Participant 17, “because refugees came to Canada, they do nothing but spending taxpayers’ money, and they also occupied the immigration opportunity for international students”.

Relationship. During the discussion on participants’ social connections in Canada, although some participants claimed they have friends from different countries, most participants felt distanced from locals, and most of them preferred Chinese friends over other ethnicities because of the linguistic, cultural and ideological differences.

Isolation from friends and family is one of the most common factors in the initial stage of many participants’ experiences in Canada. Participant 8 shared her initial experience in Canada during the interview. She believes that homesickness and loneliness are two common factors for most international students. Moreover, Participant 7 claims that she had some friends who are local Canadians or who are from other countries, but they were not close friends. According to Participant 7, “occasionally I say hello to them but... we didn’t hang out, so they were mostly hi-bye friends”.

As the participants explained the reasons behind their preference for Chinese friends, most of them mentioned the cultural differences and different approaches in friendship. As one of the cultural differences that distanced Chinese students from locals, even if Participant 10 was able to fluently communicate in English, he still had some struggles in getting used to local slang

and casual languages. Moreover, some participants illustrated that Canadians and Chinese people have different boundaries and rules in friendship. Participant 5 states that, even if she was close to a local girl, she learnt to respect their decision and personal space, but she would talk her Chinese friends into doing things together. Similarly, Participant 14 argued that Canadian friends have strong principles.

Even if Canadians are very close friends with me, they will set the rules very clearly.

... We had group work in class. If I finished my portion a little bit late, or if my portion was smaller, it would cause some arguments.

Career. The discussion related to working experience in Canada focused on a series of topics including the job-hunting process and the working condition. In terms of finding a job in Canada, most participants suffered from finding a job that is relevant to what they studied in universities. Among all 4 participants who thought their job-hunting experiences were smooth, 2 of them had previous working experiences, usually from working in the co-op program or similar internship positions. Additionally, Participant 16 chose to work in a company owned by his relative. According to Participant 16, “working for a relative means a better chance in an immigration application. He will be more protective of you, and your path of becoming a permanent resident will be slightly easier”. On the other hand, a position that allows participants to exploit what they learn from universities is hard to find. Participant 13 notes her experiences in finding the job she currently works at:

Then I graduated at the end of December 2016, and then I didn't find a job until about August 2017. ... I worked there for about three or four months, and then I started looking for a new job. ... I would go to some of those tech-events, in which I drank beers with

others and tried to know more people. After that, I searched for 5 to 6 months, found my present job, and then I have been working there for all this time.

In regard to the post-graduation job-hunting experience, international students' status in Canada is another limitation for them. Even though Participant 5 studied in an Entrepreneur program and intended to start her own business someday, she had to work in a sales position after graduation.

I did not dare to start a business in Canada. In fact, ... we have a market in Victoria every summer, I tried to sell scarves there. But the result wasn't impressive. I think I might make more money working in a restaurant, so it was not worth my time. That is why I thought it was difficult to start a business in Canada. ... I still had to become a permanent resident first, which means I had to work for someone else.

With the limitations international students face in Canada, many participants worked in local Chinese companies founded by people from mainland China. While working for Chinese employers seems like an easier option, Chinese companies in Canada are usually small companies. As an example, Participant 16 works in his relative's education institution. In spite of his training in an Education program, his work has nothing to do with what he learnt.

What we learnt from school was more about the ability to manage or communicate, but this is not useful in Vancouver or in this kind of Chinese companies because their scale would be smaller. Since the company only has about 4 to 6 employees, you do not need to manage them [like in a public school].

When Participant 13 was waiting for her diploma, she also worked for a Chinese employer.

I found a job as an editor for WeChat public accounts. The company was owned by a couple and they did not know what they were doing. They wanted to make money, and then they changed their minds every two or three days... In fact, there were some illegal things going on... and then they were very disrespectful to people.

Working for money-driven small-scale companies that profit from publishing WeChat content is a common experience shared by many participants. According to Participant 8 and Participant 6, in order to add more experiences on their resumes, some students joined these companies in part-time positions when they were still at school; some worked in Chinese companies with overtime and a bad salary because they needed to apply for immigration.

Among all interviewees, Participant 17 is the only business owner in Canada. He is currently applying for his permanent residency and working in Canada. Even though he managed to start a business with a work permit, his business was not growing ideally.

Business is very slow. ... The past few months have been good, but it is difficult to find long-term development. ... [As of communication in business,] people here communicate through emails, and it takes a day or two to get a reply. But in China, it is faster. If something happens, it will be solved over a phone call.

Similar to the difficulties in starting a business in Canada, Participant 11 and Participant 14 both find the Canadian market too small for young people. Participant 11 graduated from a Finance program, and Participant 14 studied in a double major in Business and Design. They both think that the business and technology markets in Canada have limited opportunities for young people.

4.1.4 Preference between Canadian and Chinese values

When participants were asked to discuss the mainstream values they agree on in Canada and in China, almost half of the participants admitted that they are heavily influenced by Canadian ideologies. One of the participants claims that she agrees to both Canadian and Chinese values while she recognizes the pros and cons of both ideologies. Only one of the participants admits that he was not familiar with Canadian culture and values.

Most participants argue that they are more inclined to Canadian values since they spent their teenage life in Canada. As a result, many interviewees show great acceptance towards Canadian ideologies because of the care for humanity. Participant 8 argues that she has changed a lot in Canada: “my mindsets and values are formed in Canada because I came when I was young. I spent my whole teenage years here, so my values are closer to here”. As well, Participant 1 believes that because she came to Canada after high school, her values were formed in Canada. Every time when she travelled back to China, she would realize that she is different from domestic Chinese. With that said, humanity or the care for people is one of the most discussed topics. According to Participant 10,

The operation of Canadian society as a whole feels more people-oriented. Considering their religious beliefs, perhaps when governments or enterprises make a big decision, they will consider the human factor. But in China, ... they may sacrifice the interests of a considerable number of people in exchange for certain economic benefits. ... it will deepen social contradictions in the long term.

Similarly, Participant 8 illustrates that Canadian companies also show more respect to people's efforts over the profit-driven or result-driven companies in China.

On the other hand, many interviewees suggested that their values are a mix of Canadian and Chinese values. In terms of the lifestyle in Canada and in China, Participant 15 suggests, I like this kind of freedom, equality and casualness in Canada, which allows people to be themselves. You will find that everyone in China is very progressive, everyone has their own goals and works hard for their own goals... In Canada, they do not have to struggle to live a decent life. In China, if you don't work hard, you will fall behind a lot.

Participant 13 shows agreement to the comments above, she also suggests,

I think there are some things here, such as democracy, freedom, tolerance, diversity and pluralism, which are good, and I agree with them very much. But... they naively trust their own luck and the whole social system, and I think they have no experience. You may feel that the Chinese are demanding such strength and speed... And this kind of value is very one-sided. If you say that you don't want to fight nor to be the best, then people will think that you don't have any ambition, or this person is weak.

Last but not least, Participant 17 suggests that he was not adapted to the Canadian culture, so he still had more agreement with Chinese values.

4.1.5 Level of adaptation in Canada

In spite of a participant claiming to be a Chinese Canadian, the data demonstrated that participants commonly have five types of adaptation issues.

The first two types of issues in the data question the idea of adaptation. Some participants suggest that local society also needs to adapt to international students in Canada, while others argue that it is not fair for international students to erase their past in order to fit into the local society. As an example for the first case, Participant 15 indicates that: "I wanted to say that I had

adapted, but I thought that others might not have adapted to me in this city. This city doesn't necessarily adapt to me". On the contrary, Participant 6 shows her mutual adaptation process between her and her husband.

Most foreigners take showers in the morning, have you heard of that? ... But you know the Chinese take showers at night before going to bed. So after we got married, the funny thing is, now we take shower twice, both at night and in the morning.

Furthermore, some participants only want to live their lives, so they did not care about the adaptation process. Participant 13 suggests,

Now I'm still in the process of adaptation because I don't think I can completely give up my way of thinking like a Chinese, or my pride. I don't like people saying that I have to give up my original things before I can adapt. I think it's unfair for me. I am still in self-adjustment and I want to find a balance.

The other two types of most repeated adaptation issues are caused by isolation from "Western society" due to the large population of Chinese people in Canada. Participant 9, Participant 12 and Participant 17 admit that they preferred Chinese friends over people from other countries, while they usually only hang out with students from mainland China. "Because now I work in Richmond [a suburb city of Vancouver heavily influenced by Chinese culture] ... even if I do not speak English, I can have a very good life here. ... my work, my relatives and my friends are [all Chinese,] as if I'm still in China," says Participant 16. Moreover, Participant 7 suggests that she did not feel adapted to the local society,

I have tried to find a way to blend in, but I can't say I fully integrated. Fully integrated people should play and communicate with foreigners a little bit more. I only hang out

with them once a month or once every two months, but I see my Chinese friends every 3 or 5 days.

4.2 Identification

Participants were asked about how they identify themselves, as well as how they see Canadians. This section is divided into three sub-themes: nationality, identity formation, and Canadian identity.

4.2.1 Nationality

Among all participants, a few of them identify themselves as Canadians, but they still think they are different from the native Canadians. Participant 8 came to Canada without knowing that she was a permanent resident of Canada. Now, she is the only one in her family who renounced her Chinese citizenship.

I don't think I can say that [I'm a member of Canadian society] because I actually have relatively little work experience in Canadian society. ... Although I'm a Canadian now, there are still some language or innate aspects that make me less competitive than local Canadians.

Participant 8 argues that even if she sees herself as a Canadian, she also simultaneously recognizes her differences with locals.

Many participants were either permanent residents of Canada or in the application procedure. Even though some of them wanted to stay in Canada, they were not planning to become Canadian citizens. As an example, Participant 6 says, "in Canada, you don't use your passport until you travel abroad, you only use your driver's licence. If you use your driver's

licence, they don't know whether you are Canadian or Chinese". Moreover, people applied for permanent residency as an extra option. According to Participant 16,

With a PR, I hope I can find things to do in both China and Canada... if I find something I want to work on, I may give up my PR then. ...I applied for PR not because I wanted to stay in Canada, but because I wanted to have one more choice... when China is more comfortable to live in, I would voluntarily give up my right and it would be my choice. If I directly return home now, I won't have any other choice.

Last but not the least, some participants are very proud of their Chinese identity. These participants either chose to go back to China without applying for permanent residency, or they simply value their citizenship. As Participant 2 was asked about how she sees her citizenship, she says that "I'm proud of my citizenship", in a firm tone. Participant 1 suggests that, even though she used to think that it would be convenient to travel with a Canadian passport, she realized that "visa is just a visa, and it is not very complicated [to travel with a Chinese passport]. I can go where I want to go quickly".

4.2.2 Identity formation

The data indicates that aside from nationality, work, family and social impacts are three major factors affecting participants' identity formation in Canada. In fact, Participant 13 claims that the identity being Chinese is not enough to demonstrate who she is,

Those who live around me made money in China and came here. They have no respect for local culture, or for people of any culture. I'm not like them. Others have lived here for 10 years, and they may not remember the domestic culture at all. We're all different. I

think it's hard to define myself with a label. If I answer this question in a simple way, I think I am still Chinese, but I don't think this label has any meaning.

Family is one of the most mentioned factors in the interviews. In the discussion about factors that help participants to become Canadians, Participant 15 says that "I think I may not be fully integrated because although I lived here for a long time, I do not have a stable home yet. If I go home now, I must be back to my parents to feel at home". Some participants who stayed in Canada also indicates that they made that choice because they wanted to start a family here or they already started a family in Canada.

Work and social impacts are two other factors that were commonly mentioned as factors that influenced participants' identity formation. Among many participants who chose their settlement based on job opportunities, Participant 7 attaches even more importance to career when it comes to her identity.

Although I graduated from a foreign university, there are so many overseas returnees, it's nothing special anymore, especially if I compare myself with my friends in the United States. My younger cousin studies Data Science at Columbia University. I think her friends are those with identities [or social status 身份]. They were smart in schools and in foreign schools. Now, they work for Amazon or Facebook. Compared to them, I'm an unidentified person.

Similarly, Participant 4 would only consider herself a member of Canadian society if she participated in the community. "I think as long as I can participate and contribute well, I can be included as a part of the Canadian society ... but I would never consider myself as a part of the Canadian citizenship," says Participant 4.

4.2.3 Canadian identity

When participants explain their understandings of Canadian identity, the values of cultural diversity and equality, social connections, language capacity, career and belongingness are factors that influence the construction of Canadian identity.

Inclusiveness and respect are features of Canadians that are recognized by almost all participants. For example, according to Participant 9,

I feel that this country is very tolerant of cultures, including their clothes. There were some classmates who have to wear that kind of veil because of religious reasons, but the schools are also very tolerant. They don't have to take it off or be accused of anything.

People are very tolerant and respect your cultural background.

Because of the inclusiveness, people can be themselves in Canada, which leads to many diasporas. Participant 16 mentions that he did not “feel like living in a foreign country” in Richmond, BC, because of the large population of Chinese. Participant 2 also believes that the acceptance of cultural diversity provides people with the opportunities to explore “possibilities of their lives”.

Social connections and stable sources of income are also mentioned by many participants. Participant 9 thinks of them as the two factors that define a Canadian besides the legal status of permanent residency. She indicates that the second step to becoming a Canadian is “to build a Canadian native social circle and then to have a non-Chinese working environment, or English working environment”. Similarly, Participant 10 argues that “at the economic level, you must have a stable income here, or you can have some long-term social connections here so that I can say that you are integrated into the social group”.

Furthermore, the ability to communicate in English and the feeling of belonging to the local society are also mentioned in some interviews. As an example, Participant 10 suggests, I think from my personal point of view, one is that, in Canada, at least you have to be able to communicate freely. You need a certain level of language foundation or a certain degree of cultural understanding. When you communicate something about Canada, you can express some of your views or your understanding of the whole Canadian system. Moreover, Participant 14 emphasizes the acceptance of Canadian ideologies as part of the condition to become a Canadian.

Spiritually, culturally, and in terms of your lifestyle, only if you agree with the way of life in Canada, can you consider yourself as a Canadian. If you are going to live in one place for a long time, when your ideas are different from the locals, there is no way to adapt to that environment.

4.3 Cosmopolitanism

During the interviews, participants' discussion demonstrated a high level of influence from the cosmopolitan education system in Canada. The impacts indicated in the data are on several aspects of participants' lifestyles and ideologies, including the intercultural capacity, inclusiveness to diversity, global awareness, critical thinking, freedom, social responsibility, and life-long learning. Even though many participants admit that they encountered reverse cultural shocks as they returned to China, some of the participants still did not see themselves as global citizens.

4.3.1 Cosmopolitan education result

After graduating from Canada, most participants had enhanced ability with intercultural communication as well as a better understanding of cultural diversity and global awareness. Participant 5 states that she was trained in Canada with the capacity and confidence to live in other countries.

I feel, right now, I can go to any English-speaking country in the world, I can survive, I have the ability to survive. To me, this is my definition of global citizens... It has something to do with the Canadian study experience, because firstly it trains my English, enhances my confidence and understanding of the inclusiveness of this culture.

She also believes that inclusiveness and respect towards different cultures are important qualities that define a global citizen.

Even if we are all Asians, some of us are very diligent, some are lazy, some are singing and dancing, and others are not. That is the same for foreigners. That is, I will divide it into individual differences, and I will not think of it as racial differences. [Global citizen] feels like an attitude to me. ... In fact, we can feel that even within China, if a person is prejudiced against another, he will not want to talk to that person.

Many participants also agree that what they learnt from friends from other cultures made them better people. Participant 13 mentions that the “variation” in Vancouver, including the differences between individuals rather than ethnic groups, made her “confused about her cultural identity”, but it is also an “opportunity to think about my own identity”.

Moreover, many participants demonstrate a global vision and a “stateless” identity as a result of studying in Canada. Participant 2 believes that “we are all global citizens, as we all live in this world, we live on this earth, and we share our information, so we learn from each other”.

Similarly, Participant 4 learnt to work online with clients from all over the globe, and she states that “people who speak in English like native speakers ... can demonstrate their skills well and promote their skills globally, and they can be hired in many parts of the world”. At the same time, some participants emphasize that they try to make life decisions without being influenced by their nationalities. For example, Participant 13 argues,

In fact, I really want to be able to treat myself as a stateless person. I don't want my nationality to limit the way I think. I have always believed that there are many commonalities between people, and then I can go to many places and experience many cultures, not necessarily settle down. I think that defining what culture I came from would limit me.

Additionally, Participant 10, Participant 16 and Participant 17 all demonstrate the possibility and the intention of living in both Canada and China as their future plan.

Furthermore, despite some participants claiming that they already had the quality of independence, most participants saw the ability of critical thinking as a result of the educational experience in Canada. Participant 16 believes that, before he came to Canada, he was able to stay independent and question an Internet sensation when others show conformity to it. However, he also suggests that “growing up in Canada allows me to develop this quality”. Similarly, Participant 7 states that because of her education experience in Canada, she dislikes the mainstream pursuit of appearance, fame and popularity among young people in China, and she is able to take time and reflect on herself.

Likewise, Participant 1, Participant 5 and Participant 13 believe that they are less arbitrary because of their experience in Canada. Participant 1 states that “after I came to Canada,

I began to think from the perspective of an onlooker and to analyze from different perspectives, I became less arbitrary than I was". As well, Participant 9 became more rational as she retained her love for China. She suggests, "I don't think I will blindly love my country. I will be more rational. If it is wrong, I will say that it is wrong... I won't stop you from pointing it out". In addition to the ability of critical thinking, Participant 10 also describes the easy access to useful information as a cause for his ability to think from multiple perspectives.

Because in China, you will find that, from the search engine, the result of your same entry on Baidu [the most popular Chinese search engine] may be different from those on Google. You may receive more advertisements or commercial information on Baidu, but even if you may have some advertisements on Google, you can still find the definition of a word or some academic articles. I think Google will give you more useful information.

Participant 7 also states that, because of her experiences in Canada,

I will look into anything I can think of and dig up the information without any boundaries. But in China, you can't see certain news from other countries... After I came back to China, I feel that what people read on a daily basis or the public sphere is manipulating people.

As a result of their global learning experience, many participants gained a sense of responsibility to care for the society and international affairs. According to Participant 2,

I just feel like the Western culture provides me with a lot of opportunities and possibilities for myself to think about my life and my own missions and... how many possibilities I can create and I can do, not only for myself but also for my families, for my social works [communities].

Moreover, Participant 11 emphasizes that the social responsibility of global citizens leads to a more peaceful world. He suggests that “it is a good thing to have a sense of responsibility for international affairs. After all, many things are caused by differences, and differences in positions lead to such a chaotic world”.

In addition to the growing independence, some participants changed their opinions on education due to their experience in Canada. For example, Participant 16 describes his changed attitude towards studying,

Because my grades in high school were not good, the main reason is that I did not love learning, ... I do not like it when everyone is taught in the exact same way. ... When I was in China, I thought only an idiot would like learning... In Canada, I went to a major that I like, and then my teacher paid a lot of attention to me, so I was in a state of enjoying learning.

In like manner, although Participant 12 used to shop luxury products as a hobby when she was younger, she grew to spend more money on self-development instead.

I used to like buying from luxury brands, but later I felt it was not so interesting. It might be better to spend the money on travelling [and] ...on experiences or learning new skills. ...the joy of buying a thing or two won't last long, it will be gone after a few days.

However, an experience or a skill is likely to make you happy and keep a happy mood for a long time, and then you can also share your experience with others.

4.3.2 Different understanding of global citizens

Although most participants recognize cosmopolitan qualities within themselves, many of them still do not define themselves as global citizens. Within the interview data, differences

between the participants and global citizens vary, including the time they spend in other countries, the legality of sojourners, the social connections and the intercultural capacity.

Few participants define global citizens with a focus on the social benefits one could enjoy in any country. Participant 1 explained her understanding of global citizens: “For example, if you live in the European Union, you may go to any country, and you can enjoy the same benefits as locals”. Participant 11 also thinks that global citizens would have properties in every country, and they can make a living anywhere. Likewise, Participant 10 argues,

I think global citizens should be able to enjoy at least medical care in both countries.

Then the other is your economic income. Is my income taxed by one single country, or do I have to pay multiple taxes in different countries?

More specifically, Participant 10 states that he is not a global citizen because he prefers living in Canada, and he has not yet figured out the income tax if he needs to live and start a business in both China and Canada.

Aside from the legal perspective, Participant 13 indicates that being tourists is not enough to be a global citizen, while Participant 12 believes that global citizens need to actively build connections with people from different cultures. Participant 13 states that “being a tourist is solely part of it. As a tourist, you experience only the surface of a culture. Secondly, I have no money of my own, and no capital to keep moving, to go somewhere else”. On the other hand, Participant 12 suggests,

I don't think it is so suitable to call me a global citizen. Deep down, I still prefer to play with friends from a Chinese background. But I don't exclude making friends from other countries. I accept all kinds of cultures, but I accept them passively.

4.3.3 Reverse cultural shock

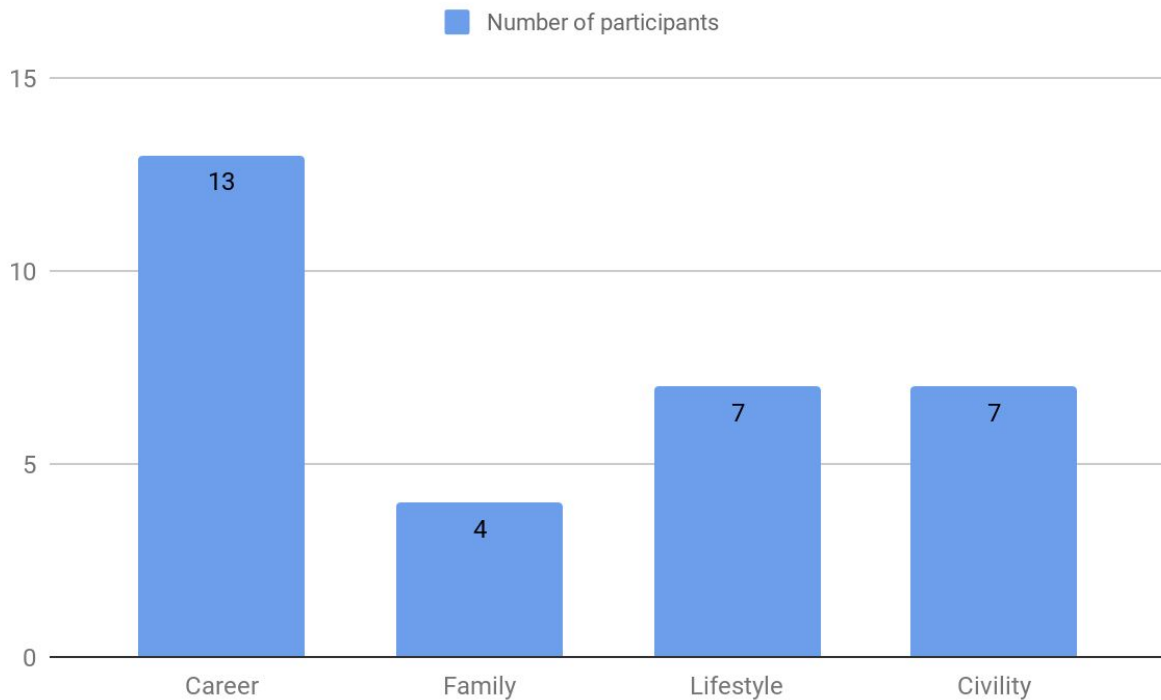


Chart 2. Different aspects of reverse cultural shocks encountered by participants.

Although most discussions on the reverse cultural shock for overseas returnees focus on the career aspect, many participants also point out some re-adaptation issues in China on the perspectives of civility, family and lifestyle.

Career. Hierarchy, work ethics, heavy social networking, and high pressures are four common topics shared by most participants who worked in China. Even though Participant 7 never worked in China herself, she heard about the hierarchy in the Chinese workplace between employers or managers and their subordinates.

In China, I heard from a friend, firstly, you won't be able to see the boss; secondly, you have to watch your mouth. You might offend someone, or you may accidentally make people feel uncomfortable.

Moreover, Participant 11 indicates that the subordinates would not have much space to operate things on their own in China. "I cannot agree with the Chinese work system, in which you must listen to the leadership", says Participant 16. Likewise, Participant 14 states,

[In China,] people in the workplace ... may be more inclined to meet the demand of the boss.... there are some vague areas and some things [principles] that he can selectively ignore. I think there is still a big gap in some aspects of work attitude and work process, which show the differences in the way people think in two countries.

One of the most discussed topics about careers in China is the heavy demand for networking skills. Participant 13 worked in China before. When it comes to going back to China, she worries that,

I was a little afraid of returning home, I knew I would not survive in the Chinese workplace because I was too straightforward. ... I know that in China, you may need to hide your personalities and to be ready to take hints at work.

Participant 12 also believes that Chinese workplace has a higher demand for networking ability, and he states,

Your ability is not the most important thing. Other aspects such as EQ, how you deal with people and so on will be considered as well. I think this is also valued in Western countries, but China particularly emphasizes this.

According to Participant 15, who worked in China for two years after graduation, “in addition to your business ability, ... you need great interpersonal skills. Your interpersonal skills are more important than your ability to get things done”.

The topic of work ethics includes many aspects of working conditions, such as the salary, the hours, and the attitudes towards employees. Participant 9 mentions that many jobs in China require a “996” working hour. The 996 working hour system, standing for a work schedule from 9 am to 9 pm for 6 days every week, is a commonly seen term on the Chinese Internet (Lin & Zhong, 2019). Participant 15 also suggests that her work felt more important than her life, representing the intrusion of work in personal life in China. According to Participant 12,

Many young people in China regard work as their whole life. When they get off work, they might still have to reply to messages about work. Even when they are on vacation, they still have to reply to the boss or help the boss with something. ... I think China has an extremely competitive market, there is no other way.

In other words, Participant 6 states that “in China, they just treat you like a working machine, somebody who can make money”. On the opposite, learning from her experiences in Canada, Participant 5 brought the “work hard and play hard” policy to her start-up business in China. She adds that “enjoying your life” is a very Western ideology to her.

With that said, the fierce competition in the market leads to a “crisis mindset”, suggested by Participant 6, for people working in China. As an example, Participant 13 says,

Maybe everyone will protect their own resources [in China]. For example, if you want to do something, not only will others not help you, they may also take away your

opportunities. I think it may also exist in other countries, but the Chinese are more defensive to each other [at work].

Along with all the long hours and pressure at work, the salary in China was not enough for Participant 15 to survive in her hometown. Without her parents' financial support, she would not be able to afford her life. Her experience also demonstrates a rare case in the data, representing the limited career opportunities in smaller cities in China. Participant 15 suggests,

To be honest, companies in Chongqing did not recruit actuaries at that time, because Chengdu, Sichuan and Chongqing did not have the demand for actuaries before. These companies usually call for help from headquarters in Shanghai whenever they need an actuary. So, in Chongqing, I couldn't find a job that is relevant to my program. I could only do a very grass-roots job in an insurance company.

Civility. Public incivility in China is a shared experience stated by many participants during the interviews. According to Participant 12,

For example, when I go to the supermarket, Westerners will line up well when they weigh the fruit. It's not a mandatory line up, but people who are educated will automatically go to the end of the line. But in China, there are always people who try to cut in line.

Moreover, Participant 14 tries to rationalize the incivility in China. He argues that people are too busy to consider the feelings of others in China, so Chinese people would comparatively spend less time helping other people.

Lifestyle. During the interviews, the discussion on lifestyle in China involved the mainstream ideologies, the fast-paced urban life, the lack of freedom in certain domains, gender-related stereotypes and the environmental and health issues.

As previously stated, many participants were not impressed by the superficial online culture and impetuous pursuit of fame and money in China. Participant 7 says,

Even though people are crazy about some social media apps, such as TikTok or Xiaohongshu, I just don't get why they like them. People are buying things as gifts to [influencers], I think they are lame and pointless. Do they want people to look up to them? Do they want fame or to make money? I really don't understand.

Likewise, Participant 15 argues that she does not like the mainstream pursuit of wealth in China, even though she appreciates the fighting spirits of young generations. She believes that “there are too many people following this ideology... Everyone is desperately thinking about how much money they want to make, and the material desire is very strong”.

At the same time, Participant 7 also believes that Chinese mainstream values require people to follow certain routines in life so they can avoid being judged by others. Participant 7 states,

My mom told me, you are a girl, and you studied in Finance, so you should work in the bank. They want to plan your future, like most Chinese, they think you have to do certain things. This is not the same in other countries. You can do whatever you want, even though I studied in this major, I don't have to find a job related to this profession. If you have an idea, you should try, and you might succeed, at least you have tried.

Most importantly, Participant 7 believes that people have certain expectations for each stage of her life. She mentions that “you have to graduate from a famous university to get into certain kinds of companies, and you will do well, whether you like this industry or not”. At the age of 26, she has been urged to get married [cui hun 催婚], and she was told to “find someone who is brilliant”.

A few participants mentioned the environmental issues and the pace of urban life during the interviews. According to Participant 1,

Because Canada has a probably slow pace of life, for many things, I don't like to rush to the end, but people in China are particularly anxious, and they want things to be done immediately. But for me, I felt like I could just let it go, don't worry too much and take it slowly.

Meanwhile, many participants suggest that minor health issues appear whenever they return to China. Participant 12 claims that she is not used to the environment, especially the air quality, in China. Likewise, Participant 5 also mentions that many overseas returnees experience increased pimples and other issues every time they return to China.

Stereotypes and customs based on gender and control over information were two other aspects discussed during the interviews. When being asked about the gender differences in China, Participant 16 argues that Chinese men are under more responsibilities in marriage, particularly before the wedding. Participant 16 suggests,

Chinese wedding is a mess to me. You invite a lot of people you don't know, and then the groom is obligated to prepare tons of stuff for their new family, from the betrothal gifts to

a new house. I think it's strange to get married this way. Why should I put my whole family's life work and financial resources into it? I think it's strange.

Freedom of information is another adaptation issue encountered by many interviewees.

According to Participant 9,

Because I would use VPN to read foreign news about China, I found that there were a lot of discrepancies between news in and outside of China. However, there were still some people who support China every day on the Internet and do not accept any criticism. For certain things, when you think about it, you'll know it's a bad thing. But these online comments recognize these bad things about our country but they don't allow you to criticize it. And the news report from government media will describe a prosperous and peaceful country.

4.4 Post-Graduation Settlement

During the discussion on post-graduation settlement, participants shared the reasons behind their post-graduation settlement decisions and their current settlement status. In order to demonstrate the factors influencing their decisions, this section is divided into three subthemes, settlement in Canada, China and other countries.

4.4.1 Settlement in Canada

When asked about the reasons to settle in Canada, career, permanent residency and family were mentioned by many participants, while culture is also discussed in some interviews.

Career. Among the discussion about the career in Canada, interviewees mainly value better working conditions and job opportunities. According to Participant 4,

I consider whether there's gonna be a better career choice for me. Now I'm trying to figure [my career] out. Our program does not offer too much opportunity to find a job in the field, so I'm using my skills from my bachelor studies and also my work experiences before coming to Canada, and I want to transfer these skills to the organization where it could fit. If I can work, it would mean a very good settlement in Canada.

She also explains that even if she worked as a designer in China before, skills in this industry are easily outdated, so returning to China is not an easy path for her. Likewise, Participant 14 stayed in Canada because he wanted to explore the local market. He suggests,

I wanted to explore the market in Canada. I wanted to know if there is any room for career development for our major. In fact, when I was at school, I didn't know much about the job opportunities related to our program.

Many interviewees chose to stay in Canada because of the comparatively ethical working conditions. In comparison with her working experiences in China, Participant 15 states,

You can live your own life when you get off work here. Because everyone communicates through emails, after work, I don't receive calls after calls anymore. ... Secondly, after I get off work in Canada, I can do my own things; I will enjoy my life. Work is to help me live a better life. ... As for interpersonal relationships, if you want to elaborate, Canada is also very complicated, but my mentality here is I don't care.

Similarly, Participant 13 also chose to stay in Canada because her previous working experiences in China required sophisticated interpersonal communication skills along with the office politics. At the same time, Participant 10 prefers the work value in Canada because of the attention to the process, and he addresses,

When you communicate with customers, ... you will pay more attention to this process, instead of just thinking about how much money the customer has invested in me, or how fast the customer wants to complete it. You may think more about long-term cooperation [in Canada], while Chinese companies finish each order quickly so they can work on the next one without thinking about the long term values.

Identity. Although not all work permit holders or permanent residents plan to stay in Canada, many participants stayed after graduation because of the work permit or the permanent residency. Aside from the intention to explore the local market in Canada, Participant 14 stayed in Canada because of the post-graduation work permit. “Because when I just graduated, I didn’t have a clear plan. At that time I got the permit to work in Canada for three years, so I wanted to explore the market in Canada”, says Participant 14. A similar experience happened to Participant 11, but he returned to China after realizing China has a better market for his industry.

Furthermore, for many participants, permanent residency is seen as an extra option and a sense of safety from getting more control. According to Participant 7,

It is better to become PR. If I didn’t become a PR, that means I returned to China after hanging out in Canada for a bit. ... and then if I came back to Canada (with no PR), they might reject my visa application because of the tendency for immigration. If I went back to China in that case, I won’t be able to come back to Canada. I wanted more options, and this company can help me get my PR, so I worked there for about 2 years.

Similarly, Participant 16 applied for permanent residency because “I don’t know what to choose yet”. As a permanent resident, he will be able to explore both Canada and China, and he will have more choices when he finally decides which country he wants to live in.

Family. The family factors that motivated participants to stay in Canada involve their new family in Canada, family support in Canada and the lack of freedom in China. Many participants argue that they chose Canada over China because they met someone and started to plan for their future. For example, Participant 12 admits that even though her plan is to stay in Canada without applying to be a citizen, “I just want to live and work here and let my children receive education here in the future”. Similarly, Participant 6 and Participant 10 were not sure which country to settle in until they got married and had their children in Canada. According to Participant 10,

One [reason to settle in Canada] is that I was married, and then my wife is in Canada. She also said that she wanted to work in Canada and apply for PR. The other is that our first baby was born, and he is Canadian. We also think that Canada may be a better place to take care of our kid at that stage, because of the food safety and better environment, so we thought we'd stay there for a while.

On the other hand, Participant 16 reveals that his mother “paved the way” for him when he was still in school. Because he has relatives here, his mother told him to find the relatives and work for them after graduation.

On the contrary, some participants decided to stay in Canada because of their demand for personal space as well as the ideological conflicts with their parents. The relationship between participants and parents caused pressure for Participant 15. She states that “my parents were too strict, so I want to be free. People are very contradictory, I may feel homesick abroad, but when I go home, I find that I want to be free”. Similarly, Participant 13 says that “after I studied abroad, I felt that my demand for personal space was getting higher and higher”, but she would not be

able to move out from their parents if she lived in China. Furthermore, “I wasn’t able to communicate my ideas with my parents. We talked about a lot of things in this interview, but my parents would not understand or accept them”, says Participant 16. More specifically, Participant 13 explains the differences between her and her parents,

They are concerned about some practical problems, but they don’t care about some of my ideas, such as the impact of my education on me. I want to tell them about my future plans. In fact, I think about more abstract things. Although my family did not urge me to get married, they think about future plans as quantifiable things, not what kind of person I want to be. This is a huge disappointment for me.

As a result, she decided to live in Canada to “escape” from her family.

Gender. When asked about the influence of gender-related culture on their post-graduation settlement, some participants believe that it would be a reason for them to stay in Canada. As stated in the previous section, Participant 16 believes that, in China, men carry more responsibilities and pressure in a marriage. He explains his resistance towards Chinese customs revolved around wedding ceremonies, especially the financial burden for his family.

So I think if a man lives in China, the pressure will be much greater than here... what I explain to you might be easy for you to understand, and you may support them, but in most cases in China, people will not even understand me. ... I believe that you don’t need to build relationships with so many unrelated people, and they don’t need to participate in a very important ritual of your life.

At the same time, Participant 6 believes that Canadian culture has more respect for women. She states that Canadians “still value you as a stay-home mom”, and “at least the government gives you one year of maternal leave” for pregnant women at work.

Culture. Some participants claim that staying in Canada or China is the same for them as a result of multiculturalism in Canada. Participant 16 mentions that his life in Canada feels like living in “another city in China”, and he argues:

The concept of distance is not particularly obvious for two reasons. The first is that there are many influences of Chinese culture wherever you go, especially in Richmond ... The second reason is that the technology is very developed now. ... because I talk to most of them [people in China] through video or voice chat, and there is no distance limit. I won't have the feeling that I am abroad when I talk to my family.

Furthermore, Participant 3 argues that Canadian culture would be a reason for her to stay. In spite of some conflicts, she believes that most Canadians support diversity, creating a “welcoming environment for me to stay”.

4.4.2 Settlement in China

Within the data, career and family are two major reasons for most participants' settlement in China. Lifestyle and immigration policies are two other reasons discussed by some participants.

Family. Reunion with family members, especially with parents, was the most discussed reason for participants' settlement in China. Even though Participant 8 became a Canadian citizen during her time studying in Canada, she returned to China after graduation because of her parents.

My mother likes China very much. Although we immigrated to Canada as a family, when she had to stay in Canada to maintain her PR, she was very depressed. ... If I settle in Canada and work in Canada in the future, she won't see me often, she won't be happy and she'll always be talking about it.

Moreover, one participant mentioned that being the only child in their family also motivated their post-graduation settlement in China. Participant 7 argues that her parents expected her to go back to China because she is their only child. Then, the support between family members is another factor discussed by several participants. Participant 12 mentions that she returned to China because her family was sick. One of the reasons for Participant 14's return to China was also his ageing parents. He explains that "they are getting older and older, and they are also doing business in China. I think that I may help them a little bit once I come back".

Career. Most participants state that China has more job opportunities and better career development capacity in the long term. As Participant 8 worked in Canada, she felt an invisible bias towards immigrants. She believes that "it's difficult to be promoted to a high position or high-level job... Although I'm a Canadian now, there are still some language or innate aspects that make me less competitive than local Canadians." Meanwhile, some participants argue that career development is limited to certain industries in Canada. Participant 11 states,

Overall, the Canadian financial market is still inferior to New York and Chicago. ... I feel that many of Canada's elites have gone to the United States to work. ... I tried to work in the Finance industry and some community activities. In the end, I didn't think it was suitable for me. ... the stock market is too small.

Similarly, despite Participant 14 enjoying the environment and working conditions in Vancouver, he went back to China because “tourism and education are the only developed industries in Vancouver”. Participant 14 believes that more opportunities would be found in China within the advanced technology industries.

Lifestyle. Most participants describe the Canadian lifestyle as a “slower” lifestyle compared to the fast-paced urban life in China. Participant 2 plans to go back to China after she finishes her current Master’s program. She emphasizes that “[in Canada,] the living environment is quite peaceful, and the pace of life is quite slow, so it’s not really good for young people to reach or achieve their career goals”. Then, some participants prefer Chinese society because of the Chinese approaches to social connections. According to Participant 9, China is seen as a “society built on the human relationship [ren qing she hui 人情社会]”, while Canada is considered as “a material society”. She believes that it feels lonely living in Canada because her social relations are very reciprocal here.

The life quality and lifestyle as a sojourner are another two topics discussed by a few participants. Participant 1 returned to China for an easier life supported by her family, and she says: “if I was in Canada myself and if I wanted to maintain my lifestyle, I might need to spend a lot of time and work really hard because I am alone after all”. At the same time, Participant 9 decided to return to China because she was tired of moving and the drifting lifestyle of international students. She states that “even if I go and study in Hong Kong, I still have to rent a place and relocate everything, then I have to sell them all when I leave, I just don’t like this”.

Immigration. Many participants decided to move back to China due to the difficult and changing requirements of immigration policy in Canada. Participant 1 witnessed her peers

suffering through the immigration process, and she did not want to stay in Canada because “some of the popular career options among us, like the banks, were not eligible for immigration application. That was also another factor I took into account”. Participant 6 mentions that it was hard to apply for immigration to Canada until Justin Trudeau became the president. She says that “in 2012 or 2013, at first, it was difficult for international students to get their permanent residency. At that time, the conservative party didn’t quite welcome international students to immigrate”. Moreover, for those who returned to China, they have difficulty coming back to Canada. When asked if she plans to go back to Canada in the future, Participant 9 explains that “even if I want to, it’s really difficult. First of all, I didn’t get a work visa [after graduation], and if I go back, I have to apply for a new school, but it’s not so easy to apply. Because I gave up [the visa] before, so I have to start all over again if I come back to Canada”.

4.4.3 Settlement in other countries

The fame of universities and their influence on personal profiles are the main reasons for participants to study in another country after graduation from a Canadian university. According to Participant 12, because some Canadian universities have tough grading systems and high standards of admission for Master’s programs, she had to apply for universities in other countries. Participant 1 decided to study in Australia before she returned to China, and she states: “if I want to go back to China, I might need a Master’s degree, so I went to Australia for it”. As well, Participant 12 states that: “Even if I return to China in the future, a Master’s degree makes my profile more impressive compared with the Bachelor’s degree. I didn’t plan to live abroad at that time”. In addition to the two participants above, Participant 3 went to the UK because her boyfriend found a job there.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter has three sections. They answer the three research questions respectively and reflect on the analysis to demonstrate the key factors that impact participants' post-graduation migration plans. Theories from the literature review will be compared with the research result, along with some direct quotations from participants, to show the similarities and discrepancies between theories and the result.

5.1 Cross-Cultural Experience and Post-Graduation Settlement

To what extent acculturative experience affects international students' decision to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle back in China or (c) re-immigrate to a different country outside China and Canada?

In the research result, regarding cross-cultural experiences, the most discussed factors that influenced participants' post-graduation settlement include career options and conditions, social connections, cultural adaptations, as well as psychological and academic experiences. Many researchers have studied the relationship between international students' cross-cultural experiences and post-graduation settlement in the host country. This research result is in agreement with some of the existing theories, but it has as well outlined some discrepancies.

5.1.1 Career

Several studies demonstrate the impact of career factors on international students' willingness to stay or return. According to Zhu,

[There are] four important factors that impacted their willingness to return, namely: the occupational situation for Chinese talents in science and technology; the talent-absorbing

power of the USA; the international economic situation; and China's economic, science, and technology development (2016, p. 75).

Among all participants, many of them chose to return to China because of the limited opportunities in Canada and the more advanced technology and finance industries in China. Participant 8 suggests that: "The reason I chose to return to China at the time was that I felt that it's difficult to be promoted to a high position or high-level job". Meanwhile, Participant 11 and Participant 14, who graduated from Business and Design programs, returned to China for the demand for talents and future development opportunities in China. Participant 14 finds that cities such as Vancouver only had developed education and tourism industries, whereas the IT-related industries are too weak for him to find a good position.

Furthermore, Lu, Zong and Schissel (2009, p. 288) also argue that "professional factors", which include salaries, working conditions and opportunities for future development, are one of the three types of factors that influenced students' post-graduation settlement. Even though some participants see China as a good market for career-driven young people, Canada attracts Participant 13 and Participant 15 with better working conditions and better salaries. Participant 13 suggests that, compared to the Chinese workplaces that prioritize interpersonal skills over actual work, the Canadian workplaces have fewer office politics. Participant 15 returned to Canada after working in China for several years because she prefers the work-life balance in Canada, where she can enjoy her life after work. What's more, within 6 years after graduation, many international students return to China because they make less than Canadian students "with similar demographics, educational qualifications and pre-graduation work experience" (Frenette, Lu, & Chan, 2019, p. 5). On the contrary, Participant 15 was not satisfied with her career in

China. Participant 15 reports that, although Chongqing is a new first-tier city slightly smaller than Chinese metropolises such as Beijing or Shanghai, the insufficient demand for actuary positions and the meager salary were the reasons for her unsatisfied experiences in China. The data demonstrate gaps in career development between Chinese metropolises, other Chinese cities and Canadian cities.

5.1.2 Connections

Personal connections in Canada are argued to be another factor that influences students' post-graduation settlement. Personal connection is usually "exemplified by family structure and friendship networks" (Lu et al., 2009, p. 288), because building a stable friendship with Canadians and participating in social activities can "clearly facilitate adaptation into Canadian society" (Lu et al., 2009, p. 288). Participant 15 argues that she felt respected when she was supported by her local friends during her adaptation to Canada. While Participant 3 was supported by her friends during her adaptation to Canada, Participant 6 stayed because she married a Canadian husband. Moreover, "insufficient contacts" (Chen, 2017, p. 88) with locals could lead to isolation in Canada, which could affect international students' willingness to stay after graduation. Participant 9 enjoyed the warm social connection in China, whereas Canada is considered as "a material society". She believes that it feels lonely living in Canada because her social relations were very reciprocal. After returning to China for a while, Participant 11 argues that he prefers the Chinese lifestyle over the Canadian one because his life was too simple, and he had only a few friends in Canada.

5.1.3 Culture

Some scholars believe that international students who adjusted to the language and host culture are more likely to be satisfied with their education experience in the host country, and they consequently could prefer to “stay and work in the host country after graduation” (Ugwu, 2014, p. 84). Likewise, the adaptation to local “social, political and cultural environment” (Lu et al., 2009, p. 288) was argued to be one of the motivations for migration. Even though Participant 17 states that he would be travelling between Canada and China, he has shown his priority to return and start his family in China after he obtains his permanent residency. After living in Canada for 8 years, Participant 17 still has a very limited understanding of the local culture. Therefore, the experience and settlement choice of Participant 17 shows some similarities with Ugwu’s statement. Although language ability is discussed by many participants as one of the difficulties in their initial adaptation to Canada, living in the Chinese community in Canada is also an option for some participants. Participant 16, as an example, lives and works in Richmond, BC. He feels that “I could live a good life here without the ability to speak in English”. Hence, in contrast to the literature, the language ability is not a premier motivation for post-graduation settlement in this research.

5.1.4 Psychology and immigration policy

The security of obtaining a stable status in the host country is proposed by Dervin (2015) as one of the motivations for migration. According to Dervin,

A tension exists between the desire for mobility (be it international or transnational) and the desire for security. Since the 1990s, many studies have observed a ‘wait and see’ strategy among overseas Chinese students. Instead of a definite return to the country of origin, students are seeking secure status in the host country (2015, p. 110).

Similarly, Participant 9 returned to China because she was seeking a stable lifestyle. Because of her experiences in Canada, Participant 9 is tired of moving and the drifting status of international students. “Even if I go and study in Hong Kong, I still have to rent a place and relocate everything, then I have to sell them all when I leave, I just don’t like this”, says Participant 9.

Likewise, some participants mentioned the uncertainty of immigration policy in Canada during the interviews. According to Participant 6, before Justin Trudeau changed the immigration policies to recruit more international students, her friends left Canada because of the difficulty in obtaining permanent residency. Participant 11 also mentions that the immigration requirement constantly changes and becomes too strict for international students to stay. On the contrary, the opportunities to live in both Canada and China as a permanent resident is seen by Participant 16 as an advantage and goal that motivated him to stay in Canada. He wants to stay in Canada and secure his permanent residency so that he would have more options to choose from when it comes to his country of residence. “When China is more comfortable to live in, I would voluntarily give up my right and it would be my choice. If I directly return home now, I won’t have any other choice”, argues Participant 16.

5.1.5 Education

Based on the study on the international doctoral students’ post-graduation settlement, Zhu (2016) suggests that the academic environment is a critical factor for Chinese students to consider after graduation. Some doctoral students stayed in the US after graduation because “those students regarded the academic environment in China as much worse than that found in the USA” (Zhu, 2016, p. 75). In a like manner, Participant 10 shows agreement to the argument. He suggests that the educational environment in Canada would be a better option for his

children. Similarly, Participant 6 mentions that: “There’s Science World, Aquarium and a lot of stuff to do. And also Vancouver is one of the biggest cities in Canada, it has many good resources, medical and educational.” As of further education experience for oneself, some participants relocated to another country for their Master’s degrees, while one of them moved back to China because of the difficulty in admission to Canadian universities. Participant 8 is a Canadian citizen currently studying at a Chinese university. She had difficulty enrolling in a Canadian university because her undergraduate university had a tough grading system so that she failed to meet the requirements for Canadian Master’s programs. After graduation, Participant 1 and Participant 12 went to Australia for similar reasons, and Participant 12 is the only one among the three of them who planned to move back to Canada. Participant 1 suggests that, as a result of the competition in the Chinese job market and the growing population of Chinese overseas returnees, she had to go back to China with a Master’s degree so she would have a more appealing profile. Therefore, the data shows that the academic environment is a motivation for participants with children to stay, whereas some participants prioritize personal education as a motivation for temporary migration.

5.2 Cosmopolitan Education and Post-Graduation Settlement

What is the impact of a cosmopolitanism education on their decision to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle back in China or (c) re-immigrate to a different country outside China and Canada?

As a result of the cosmopolitan education in Canada, most participants in this research display the key qualities of cosmopolitans. Scholars have connected three outcomes of cosmopolitan education, the interculturality, mobility and global awareness, with international

students' potential of "a cosmopolitan identity" (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 383) and the tendency to settle in countries other than their home country. The result of this study shows some alignments with these existing theories.

5.2.1 Interculturality

As a potential outcome of international students' education in Western countries, the "intercultural capital" (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013, p. 383) is an "expanded consciousness about political, cultural, and economic issues" across national boundaries, leading to inclusiveness towards "new experiences, people and places". Likewise, Poteet and Gomez argue that the traditional identity created by the boundary between states is challenged by "increasing mobility and global interconnectedness" (2015, p. 89). As a result, "over time many participants broadened their sense of belonging by their association with other students and through new experiences in the Canadian context" (Poteet & Gomez, 2015, p. 97). The intermingling between different cultures could help international students to adapt to the host country and to recognize the cosmopolitan future in different directions (Oikonomidou & Williams, 2013).

Many participants argue that they gained friendships with locals and the ability to adapt to different cultures as well as a new way of self-identification as a result of their intercultural communication with Canadians and people from other countries. Participant 5 not only has a good friend who is a local Canadian, but she also recognizes her openness towards people from various backgrounds. However, she returned to China a few years after graduation for medical reasons despite her initial intention to stay in Canada. Meanwhile, Participant 13 explains the changes in her values because of her communication with Canadian-born-Chinese (CBC).

I have met only a few Taiwanese or Hong Kong people in Beijing, but many people who grew up here may have their own self-identification. They either identify themselves as Canadians, or they feel that they are not differentiated based on their skin colours. They are identified by their own cultural awareness and identity.

The intercultural communication between Participant 13 and Chinese Canadians caused her some confusion, but she ended up seeing it as an “opportunity to think about my own identity”. As a result, Participant 13 chose to stay in Canada and started to see herself as a “stateless person”, which also relates to the mobility of graduates from cosmopolitan education.

5.2.2 Mobility

Mobility describes the status of no longer belonging to a specific location due to international students’ relocation in foreign countries and negotiated identities (Wu & Wilkes, 2017; Dervin, 2015). Hence, to the mobile international students, “home and where home (is) may still be an unknown” (Wu & Wilkes, 2017, p. 126). As an example, Participant 13 shares that she refused to be labelled as Chinese because she would be limited by that identity. She questions the capacity of “Chinese” in representing one’s complex experiences. She suggests, “I’m not like them. Others have lived here for 10 years, and they may not remember the domestic culture at all. We’re all different. I think it’s hard to define myself with a label”.

Moreover, international students could develop to see their identity as a flexible entity, so they would exploit that identity to “accumulate capital and power, seeking to maximize personal gains in particular political and economic climates” (Dervin, 2015, p. 102). In Dervin’s study (2015), students who lack the view of flexible citizenship are those who returned to China. Similarly, Participant 10, Participant 16 and Participant 17, who all chose to stay in Canada and

apply for permanent residency as their initial settlement choice, suggest that they would be looking for opportunities in both China and Canada. Participant 10 also admits that he accepts both Canadian and Chinese identities, and he sees no conflicts between them. The data indicates the impact of participants' mobile identity on their choices of not settling in China.

5.2.3 Global awareness

Because of the exposure to cosmopolitan vision in education and “international contexts” (Wu & Wilkes, 2017, p. 126), international students could be more likely to pursue their careers on the global market. Likewise, according to Piwoni (2018, p. 2), international students might adopt the idea of global responsibility, and consequently, look for an identity in a “global/transnational domain” for their future careers. When asked to discuss the influence of Canadian education on their values, Participant 2 and Participant 10 state that they developed a sense of responsibility for international affairs, or they would be more aware of their responsibility in life. Participant 7 also mentions that, instead of staying in one place, her ideal was to travel to different countries and be exposed to various cultures. However, they all returned to China for reasons other than the notion of global awareness. On the other hand, Participant 6, Participant 12 and Participant 17 use the word “self-righteous responsibility (sheng mu xin 圣母心)” to describe the refugee policy of Canada and Australia. In spite of their settlement in Canada, they still show resistance to the concept of global responsibility. In this research, participants do not prioritize the notion of global awareness as a major factor for post-graduation settlement.

5.3 Identity Negotiation and Post-Graduation Settlement

What is the relationship between the process of identity negotiation and the post-graduate decision of Chinese students to (a) settle in Canada, (b) settle in China, or (c) re-immigrate to the outside of China?

According to the participants' answers, the researcher categorized them into four stages of identity negotiation based on their acceptance of Canadian and Chinese identities. The values of multiculturalism and Confucianism were correspondingly chosen as the main indicator of Canadian and Chinese identities (Berry, 2013; Han, 2013; Link, 2015; Solé-Farràs, 2014). Most participants show the existence of both identities, and some were considered separated because they had limited awareness of the Canadian values. One participant was categorized as marginalization for her resistance to Confucianism values, while another participant was labelled as "perpetual negotiation" because she critiques values from both countries but also partially accepts both identities. According to In's study on Korean international students in the US, "students with high levels of acculturation to the U.S. reported U.S.-oriented post-graduation residency plans whereas students with high levels of engagement with Korean culture reported Korea-oriented residency plans" (2014, p. 92). Likewise, some participants in this research show similar tendencies (see Appendix D for the result of identity negotiation and post-graduation settlement of participants, p. 122).

5.3.1 Integration

Following Yu's (2018) model of acculturation, people who are integrated would accept both Canadian values and Chinese values. Familial care and responsibility, as one of the core values in Confucianism and Chinese identity, are the main reasons for many participants' return to China. Even though Participant 11 and Participant 14 demonstrate their acceptance of

multiculturalism in Canada, they both returned to China for their families upon graduation.

Participant 14 shares that he enjoyed his friendship with people from Japan, Mexico and other countries when he studied in Canada. However, according to Chen, “the data also shows that most of the only child respondents would choose to return to China to take care of their parents if absolutely necessary” (2017, p. 85). As well, Participant 7 was asked by her parents to go back to China because she is the only child. Following the Confucian ideology, children are also supposed to repay parents for their nourish by taking care of them and “fulfilling the responsibility to parents” (Chen, 2017, p. 6). Participant 14 mentions that he returned to China because his parents were ageing, and helping their business was part of the reasons for his return.

On the other hand, as multiculturalism is seen as a key characteristic that defines Canadian identity (Berry, 2013), some integrated participants chose to stay in a diversified environment. During the interviews, Participant 12 states that she learnt to respect other cultures and minorities such as the LGBTQ community, so she preferred to stay in Canada. At the same time, she appreciates that Canadians usually cherish friendship as an important part of their lives, while she still believes that parents are the ones who care for her the most.

Previous studies believe that the balance between the primary identity built in their home country and the identity developed in the host country constructs the “multi-faceted identities” of international students (Fincher, 2011, p. 916). As shown in the research result, due to the coexistence of two cultural identities, integrated participants agree to both notions of multiculturalism and Confucian family values, so their choices of post-graduation settlement depend on how much they weigh each identity. In other words, in this research, participants in

the integration category demonstrate possible post-graduation settlement plans in Canada, in China or a mobile residence in both China and Canada.

5.3.2 Separation

Participants in the status of separation in Canada are usually isolated from the Canadian community, hence, they only remain their Chinese identity and have issues adapting to the host country (Yu, 2018). In Chen's research (2017, p. 88), some respondents construct their connections within their cultural community, so they distance themselves from contacts with other ethnic groups. Similarly, Participant 16 and Participant 17 built their social network in Chinese communities during their lives in Canada. Participant 16 chose to follow his mother's words after graduation, he stayed in Canada and worked in his relative's company for immigration applications. He suggests that "because my parents spent a lot of money so I could study abroad, they sacrifice their right to be themselves for me, I can't convince myself to be myself and not consider their interests, so I would listen to their arrangement". Likewise, Participant 17 also states that he had limited contact with locals, so the Canadian culture remains strange to him. As a result, both participants intended to travel between Canada and China after obtaining their permanent residency.

In the meanwhile, Participant 9's experiences align with Chen's description of "insularity" (2017, p. 88) in the host country. She states that she was isolated in Canada because of the "material society" and reciprocal relationship between people, so she preferred to return to the Chinese society built upon human relations. The experience of Participant 9 indicates her preference for the collectivism-oriented society and interdependence of Confucianism (Fan,

Zhang & Wang, 2017). Separated participants in this research tend to not stay in Canada as their long term post-graduate settlement plan.

5.3.3 Marginalization

Participant 15 shows the tendency of marginalization as she displays her resistance to both Chinese and Canadian values. According to Chen, international students who are exposed to Western culture could have “a tendency toward weakening the idea of responsibility for the family and as the idea of individualism grows” (2017, p. 88). Participant 15 initially returned to China for her ill family member but then moved back to Canada because of the pressure at home. After she noticed a struggle between her freedom in Canada and a family reunion in China, she still chose to live in Canada. However, Participant 15 chose to live in Canada but maintained her “own pace of life”. Her relocation to Canada was due to the work-life balance in a Canadian workplace and independence rather than her appreciation of multiculturalism. Even though she has been living in Canada, she claims that she was distanced from others because of the conflicts in their ideologies.

5.3.4 Perpetual negotiation

Similar to Participant 15, Participant 13 chose to stay in Canada because of the freedom to be herself and the tolerance of variety, but her answers during the interview demonstrate a continuous negotiation of identity along with her partial agreements to certain values of both Chinese and Canadian cultures. When asked about her identity in Canada, Participant 13 argues that “I don’t like people saying that I have to give up my original things before I can adapt. I think it’s unfair for me. I am still in a self-adjustment and I want to balance them”. At the same time, she recognizes her responsibility following the family values of Confucianism (Fan, Zhang

& Wang, 2017, p. 133), but she prefers to maintain her personal space from her family. Moreover, she suggests that her values are different not only from her family but also from many Chinese people. “I just feel like I can’t belong to any group right now. Whether it’s based on culture, or language, or skin colour, I think it’s too difficult to find someone who can relate to it”, says Participant 13. Then, she chose to live in Canada because her independence and freedom are tolerated. Compared to Yu’s theoretical framework (2018), this participant is different from any of the four statuses of acculturation, including assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation. Hence, Participant 13, currently living in Canada, is categorized as perpetual negotiation indicating her differences from the other participants and the literature.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes this study with an overview of the findings, the significance of this study, some limitations and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Summary of Findings

In this research, participants' long-term settlement plans in Canada were mainly under the influence of cross-cultural experiences, including professional work environments, personal connections in Canada and education resources. Some integrated participants and a participant with an ongoing negotiation of identity chose to stay in Canada. Despite cosmopolitan education opening new perspectives for participants to identify themselves in the global market, in this research, it is not a prioritized factor for participants' settlement in Canada.

Moreover, the participant who moved from China to Canada represents a special case of marginalization as a result of the identity negotiation in Canada. Besides her pursuit of a better career environment, her migration plan illustrates an example of the demand for the work-life balance in Canadian workplaces.

As for participants who chose to go back to China, aside from the traditional family values originating from Confucianism ideologies, professional opportunities and the potential of future development are key characters that motivated participants. Meanwhile, participants in the separation category mostly chose to settle in China, indicating their strong dependence on Chinese identity. Some integrated participants, who adapted to the Canadian ideology of multiculturalism/cosmopolitanism and remained Chinese family values, also chose to return, so participants' settlement plans depend on the balance between how much they value each identity.

The mobile opportunity for travelling between Canada and China is another settlement option for some participants. As a result of cosmopolitan education, the developed mobile identity allows more possibilities for participants to create new options for post-graduation settlement. At the same time, family and career are two key factors impacting their decisions. In this research, participants with a mobile plan also have either integrated or separate identities.

6.2 Significance

In the age of globalization, most nation-states recruit highly skilled immigrants, including international students, in order to promote and cultivate their education systems internationally (Geddie, 2010, p. 1). From the students' perspective, relocation to Canada leads to a process of acculturation that impacts their identity formation. For this reason, Chinese students are educated with cosmopolitan ideologies and ambitions that might affect their future settlement and relocation upon graduation. With a qualitative approach, this study illustrates this relationship between identity negotiation during the acculturative adjustment and post-graduation settlement of Chinese international students in Canada. Through 17 interviews, this research analyzes the acculturative adjustment and identity negotiation during Chinese students' journeys in Canada, in order to find factors that impact their decisions in post-graduation settlement.

This research could not only contribute to the plan of nation-states in improving their methods to help international students with acculturation, but it could also help future students to comprehend the context in deciding their future settlement. The separate identity and limited space for career development in Canada were two of the key factors for some participants to return to China. Participant 13 shared that, during some networking events, she learnt to better

adjust to the local job market and communicate with coworkers from various cultural backgrounds, which helped her adapt to her workplace in Canada. Meanwhile, other participants discussed their difficulties in finding a job in the co-op program and after graduation. Workshops and better job opportunities for international students encouraged by both universities and the government would help students to build a sense of belongingness through finding a satisfying job and contributing to the Canadian workplace.

6.3 Limitations

Although the result of this research is limited by its sample size due to the constraints of budget, labour and time, this research indicates some new trends in Chinese international students' cross-cultural experience in Canada. It demonstrates not only new phenomena that have yet been discussed by other scholars but also discrepancies with existing literature. This research can also be considered as a pilot study whose results can be the starting point for future studies or for future scholarships.

The acculturative adjustment and identity negotiation of international students are under impacts of a variety of elements, including but not limited to their pre-arrival expectations and understandings of Canadian culture, the level of cultural diversity and the level of welcomeness of the university, the length of their journey in Canada, and their social networks (Anderson, 1994; Poteet & Gomez, 2015, Zhang & Beck, 2014; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Even though the research is designed to include as many variables as possible, the researcher can only collect and analyze a limited amount of data within the timeframe.

The researcher utilized his networking as a shortcut for recruiting former Chinese international students. Even though the participants helped to recruit more participants, due to the small sample size and limited social function of WeChat, this recruitment method could cause several biases in the research result, especially on the demographics of participants. To begin with, participants with higher levels of education experience show more autonomy in their voluntary participation. Among 9 participants who were recruited through WeChat Moment, 7 of them are either current students or graduates from Master's programs. Compared to those who were recruited through direct message invitations, these interviewees are more autonomous in participation. Many participants also share that they participated in this research because they have been or they will be conducting research in a similar format, so they try to help the researcher with his thesis. Additionally, all participants graduated with at least one Bachelor's degree, and 8 participants either graduated from or enrolled in a Master's program. With that said, the level of education of participants could lead to bias in the research result.

Gender and personality could be another two factors that cause potential biases. In this research, only 5 out of 17 participants were male, and the vast comparison between female and male participants need to be noted. The factor of personality was suggested by one of the participants as a potential cause for biased results. Since this research design requires participants to join a voice call with a strange researcher, participants could be more likely to have an extrovert personality. People with an introverted personality could react totally differently to a strange environment in a foreign country compared to someone with an extroverted personality.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the limitations in this research, based on the broad spectrum of topics discussed in this study, several topics deserve more attention from future scholars. Although most participants discussed the impact of career factors in the settlement decisions, Participant 15's experiences showcase the limitations of smaller cities in China and the drastic differences between Chinese cities. Even though Chongqing is a new first-tier city, one of the four direct-controlled municipalities that have the equal status of a Chinese province, Participant 15 still emphasizes on the absence of demand for actuary positions. Many cities in China are still not as urbanized as a city like Chongqing, so people who returned to their hometown from foreign countries could experience even more severe difficulties in job hunting or reverse adaptation. If an international student had a tough re-adaptive experience after their initial settlement in their hometown, returning to Canada could be a better choice than moving to a major city in China due to their familiarity with the host community in Canada.

Moreover, although people who lived in Chinese metropolises, such as Beijing or Shanghai, could grow up with a more urbanized and cosmopolitan lifestyle, people from smaller cities could have slightly different experiences. The differences between students' hometown might have some influences on their ideologies, language ability, post-arrival adaptation in Canada, post-graduation settlement choices, and re-adaptation experiences in China. Meanwhile, the researcher attempted to investigate the influence of pre-arrival factors, such as familial support or pre-arrival knowledge of Western societies, on participants' settlement plans. Nevertheless, due to the complexity and variety of topics in this research, this aspect was not a focus of this research. The impact of international students' origins and pre-arrival factors on their acculturative experiences and post-graduate settlement plans need to be explored.

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Footnotes

¹ “The Economic Reforms” are represented by the transformation of the Chinese planned economy to a socialist market economy. As a result, China had joined the trend of globalization and “sustained a rapid development of Chinese society and economy” (Zhang & Chang, 2016, p. 4).

² The bar chart represents the increased number of international students, and the line chart shows the increased ratio of international students for each year.

Appendix A

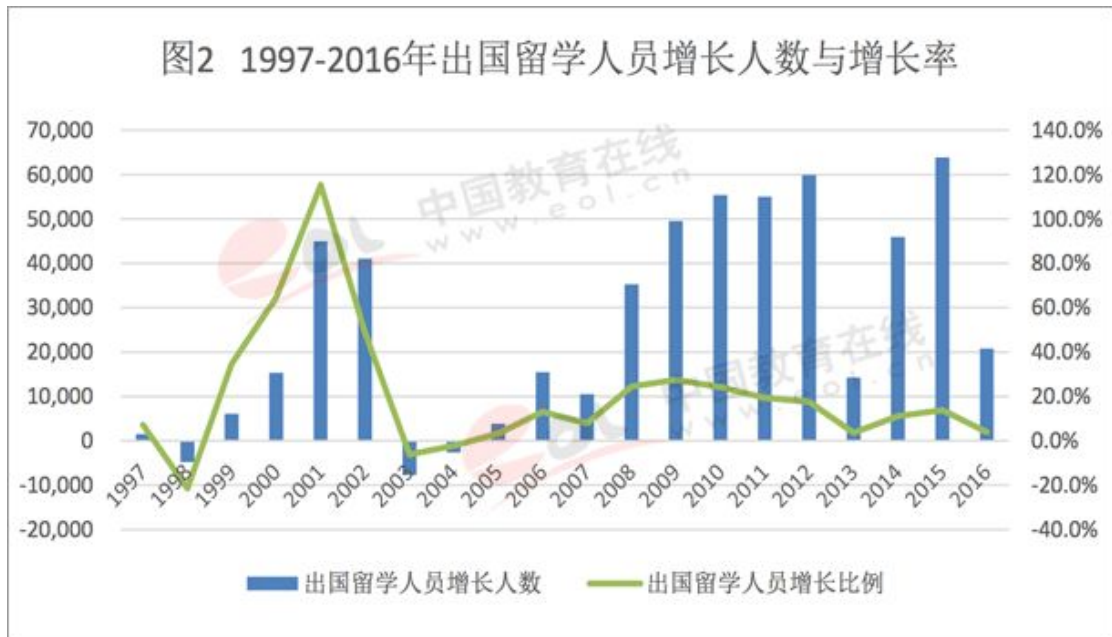


Figure 1. The increase and rate of increase of international students studying in another country². Adapted from “Zhongguo xuesheng chuguo liuxue fazhan qieshi baogao [Report on the trend of the development of Chinese international students],” by Zhongguo jiaoyu zaixian [China Education Online], n.d. Retrieved June 28, 2019 from <https://www.eol.cn/html/lx/report2017/yi.shtml>.

Appendix B

Letter of Recruitment (1st version)

Research Participants Needed

Are you interested in talking to us about your cross-cultural experience in Canada?

My name is Sebastian Zhao, and I'm studying in the Master of Arts in Communication at the University of Ottawa. I am currently recruiting research participants to study the identity negotiation of Chinese students in Canada and identify factors that influence their choices of staying in Canada, moving back to China or re-immigrating to another country upon graduation.

If you are:

- A former international student who studied in a university outside of China after 2008
- Graduated from a Canadian university and stayed in Canada
- Or graduated from a Canadian university and moved back to China
- Or graduated from a university outside of China, moved to China but relocated to another country later

Then come and join us!

Participants will be joining

- An interview for 30 mins to 1 hour
- First come first serve: once I reach the limited number, I will stop with the recruitment

- Each interview will be between the participant and the interviewer
- The interview format is flexible: either face-to-face, over the phone, or in a video chat
- Interview questions focus on your adaptation process in Canada
- Each interview will be recorded and transcribed to text, but no real name will be used in the thesis, and all recording and text will be protected with locks and passwords

If you are interested in participating,

please email Sebastian Zhao

Note: For the protection of your privacy during participation in this research, please do not contact me in public (e.g. Facebook comment or reply in a group chat).

Letter of Recruitment (2nd version)

Research Participants Needed

Are you interested in talking to us about your cross-cultural experience in Canada?

My name is Sebastian Zhao, and I'm a Master's student in the Communication program at the University of Ottawa. I'm currently looking for former international students to participate in identity negotiation research for my Master's thesis.

If you are:

- A former international student who graduated after 2008
- Graduated from a Canadian university and stayed in Canada
- Or graduated from a Canadian university and moved back to China
- Or graduated from a non-Chinese university, returned to China but relocated to another country later

If you are interested, please contact me for a 30 to 50 minutes flexible interview (face-to-face, over the phone, video chat, email or text message).

Appendix C

Sample Interview Questions

1. How long have you been in Canada?
2. Were you familiar with the “Western” society before your arrival?
3. Is Canada similar to your expectations? If it’s not, what are some differences between your imagination and actual Canada?
4. Have you made friends in Canada?
5. Have you been discriminated against in Canada?
6. Have you adjusted to the Canadian lifestyle (academically, culturally and/or socially)?
7. Has your time living in Canada changed your values and perspectives?
8. Do you see yourself as a member of Canadian society?
9. Do you see yourself as a global citizen?
10. What was your choice of post-graduation settlement?
11. What factors do you consider when you make this decision?
12. What degree did you graduate with?
13. Do you work in the field you studied for?
14. How difficult is it to rejoin the Chinese society or join Canadian society?

Appendix D

Assessment of Participants

Participant	Settlement	Canadian identity	Chinese identity	Negotiation
1	China	Only blend into the Chinese community in Canada	Home (parents) is in China	Separation
2	China	Respect and value cultural diversity	PROUD Chinese citizen; Patriotic	Integration
3	Canada	Global vision + diversity	Family values	Integration
4	Canada	Dating a Caucasian; Recognize the acceptance of Canadian society towards Asians;	Still Chinese descent	Integration
5	China	Close local friend; Adapted to local society/job	Family support	Integration
6	Canada	Married Caucasian; support the local diversity (against her Chinese relatives)	Mostly Chinese friends; against the refugee policy - Confucianism	Integration
7	China	Tried to make friends with people from other cultures; Prefer the values (morality) of Canada	More open to Chinese friends; Back to China because of parents	Integration
8	China	Prefer Canadian inclusive culture; Canadian citizen; Refer to Canadian as "us"	Parents in China	Integration
9	China	No local friends in Canada Didn't feel have a home in Canada (life of a drifter)	Enjoy the networking society; Obligation to parents - Chinese culture	Separation
10	Canada/China	Had close Canadian friends	Going back to China so his parents can help take care of the babies	Integration
11	China	We are different because of skin colours; prefer Chinese friends	Home is in China	Separation

12	Canada	Friends > families; Respect to other cultures and LGBTQ	Only child - responsibilities for parents	Integration
13	Canada	Replying on Vancouver's tolerance of her; open to different cultures and differences; can't belong to either Canada or China	Distanced and escaped from parents; Against the unitary values of public pursuit	Perpetual negotiation
14	China	Enjoy intercultural communication; friends with foreigners	Support parents' business	Integration
15	China to Canada	Not blend in the local society	Freedom > parents; Returned home before for parents	Marginalization
16	Canada/China	Living, working and socializing in the Chinese community in Canada;	Values the Chinese parents to child relationship	Separation
17	Canada/China	Only live in the Chinese community in Canada	Home is in China	Separation

Appendix E

Coding Table

<p>Theme 1: Cross-cultural experience</p> <p>Sub-theme 1: Reasons to study in Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For better education ● To study in certain major ● Bad grades in high school/middle school ● Teachers as authority ● Future employment and self-development ● Family support ● Ex-boyfriend ● Not used to the dormitory lifestyle in a Chinese university ● Safer and more educative environment than the US ● Family friends in Canada ● Curious about foreign life ● Diversity and less discrimination ● Better immigration policy than other countries <p>Sub-theme 2: Pre-arrival knowledge of Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not familiar ● Media content (TV shows, movies or news) ● Foreign co-workers in China ● Foreign study experience ● Teachers and curriculum from Canada <p>Sub-theme 3: Intercultural adaptation experience</p>	<p><i>Sub-theme 3.1: Lifestyle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underdeveloped urban infrastructures ● The good life for the income ● Cannot maintain a good life quality <p><i>Sub-theme 3.2: Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Failed to join the co-op program ● Lack of knowledge ● More fun and diversified education system ● Need time to adjust to the education system ● Lack of community in school ● Distanced from teachers ● Language as a weakness <p><i>Sub-theme 3.3: Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversified culture, food and friends ● Stereotypes ● Difficult to work for multinational clients ● Insensitive cultural jokes ● A huge population of Chinese immigrants <p><i>Sub-theme 3.4: Society</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of the sense of community ● Not able to be politically involved ● Strong sense of community between strangers ● Strong sense of social responsibility 	<p><i>Sub-theme 3.5: Relations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hi-bye friends ● Isolation from friends and family ● Different approaches to social networking ● Boundaries and principles between friends ● Slangs and casual language ● Cultural and ideological differences with locals <p><i>Sub-theme 3.6: Career</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy job hunting experience ● Slow job hunting experience ● Use family connections to find a job ● Cannot start a business ● Work in a position irrelevant to academic background ● Business grows slowly ● Bad experiences with Chinese companies <p>Sub-theme 4: Preference between Canadian and Chinese values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formed mindset and values in Canada ● Believe in the diversity ● Agree to most values in Canada ● Agree to Canadian attitude towards work ● A mix of values from both countries ● Not adapted to Canada
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<p>Sub-theme 5: Level of adaptation in Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not fair to delete their past in order to fit in ● A mutual process ● Non-English life in Canada ● Need to hang out more with locals ● Not adapted <p>Theme 2: Identity</p> <p>Sub-theme 1: Nationality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not entirely a Canadian ● Chinese Canadian ● PR, not giving up a Chinese passport ● PR as an extra option ● Chinese <p>Sub-theme 2: Identity formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work decides where they live ● Start their own family ● Social impacts <p>Sub-theme 4: Canadian identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inclusiveness towards different cultures ● Treat others with equality and respect ● Build your social circle ● Stable income in Canada ● Remain who they are in Canada ● Be able to communicate in English ● Acceptance of values ● Belonging to the community 	<p>Theme 3: Cosmopolitanism</p> <p>Sub-theme 1: Cosmopolitan education result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intercultural capacity ● Indifference attitude towards all ethnic groups ● Learn from other cultures ● Global vision on the world we live in ● Rethink of their position in the world ● Move between Canada and China ● Work with global clients ● Travels the world ● Try to be stateless and not limited by nationality ● Want to work in other countries ● Questions the popular culture ● Think from different perspectives ● Freedom of information ● A sense of responsibility for international affairs ● Enjoy studying ● Learn to self-investment <p>Sub-theme 2: Definitions of global citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tours in other countries are not enough ● The social benefits, tax and other legal limitations ● Prefer Chinese friends ● Show passivity in intercultural communication <p>Sub-theme 3: Reverse cultural shock</p>	<p><i>Sub-theme 3.1: Career</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The hierarchy between leaders and employees ● Crisis mindset and competition at work ● Sophisticated networking ● Need to change the straightforward communication style ● Long hours ● Bad salary and attitude ● Limited career options for small cities ● Work hard and play hard <p><i>Sub-theme 3.2: Civility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less time to consider for others ● Incivility in public <p><i>Sub-theme 3.3: Family</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value conflicts ● Lack of freedom ● More pressures for men in marriage <p><i>Sub-theme 3.4: Lifestyle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The conformity in popular culture ● The pursuit of fame and money ● News and information control ● Gender-based stereotypes ● Minor health issue and pollution <p>Theme 4: Post-graduation settlement</p> <p>Sub-theme 1: Settlement in Canada</p> <p><i>Career</i></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and better career options • Explore Canadian market • Skills are outdated fast in China • Less networking and office politics • Work-life boundaries • No age discrimination <p><i>Identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take advantage of the post-graduation work permit • PR as an extra option <p><i>Family</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start new families in Canada • Be supported by relatives/family in Canada • Stay away from parents in China <p><i>Gender</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs for Chinese weddings • Stay-at-home moms are respected <p><i>Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cultural diversity <p>Sub-theme 2: Settlement in China</p> <p><i>Family</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunion with family • Only-child • Need family support <p><i>Career</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invisible limits for career development in Canada • Authenticity of returnee adds value in profile • Harder to work in a high position in Canada <p><i>Lifestyle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher life quality for the same salary • Society of connections • Canada is too slow for young people • A society of networking • The lifestyle as a sojourner <p><i>Immigration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration policy changes too fast • Cannot come back to Canada after the decision is made in China <p>Sub-theme 3: Settlement in other countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To study in a better university and go back to China with a better profile • Boyfriend 	
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Appendix F

Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Identity Negotiation of Chinese Students in Canada

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research project being conducted by Sebastian Zhao from the School of Communication at the University of Ottawa. The Thesis Supervisor of this study is Boulou Ebanda de B'éri (ddboulou@uottawa.ca).

Purpose: The purpose of the research is to explore the outcomes of identity negotiation of Chinese students in Canada and its impacts on students' settlement decisions to go back to China, stay in Canada or relocate to another country.

Procedures: Between January and April 2020, 17 semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The completed report will be presented as a thesis in Spring 2020. Participants are former Chinese international students who studied in Canada or in a university outside of China after 2008.

You have been given the choice to either complete the interview online or face-to-face. If you live outside of Ottawa, Ontario, I will use Skype or WeChat to conduct the research due to the limited timeframe and budget of this research. Locations for face-to-face interviews have been chosen by you.

Questions are mainly about the adaptation experience of your journeys as international students. You will be interviewed once. The interview will be between 30 to 60 minutes, but time periods may alter to accommodate your schedule. Since I will be the principal and only interviewer, with

your permission, I will voice record the whole interviews, but the recordings will be deleted immediately after transcription.

Voluntary Participation: Since your participation in this study is voluntary, you may discontinue the interview or withdraw your consent at any time without giving reasons. You have no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time, and it will not affect our relationship. If you withdraw from the study, your interview data will be destroyed. If there are any questions you feel uncomfortable with, you are free to refuse to answer it.

Risks: This study will only be studying the personal reflections of former Chinese international students among their acculturative experiences, no physical or economic risk is foreseeable to you as a result of this study.

However, it might be a challenge for you to recall certain memories, if you experienced bullies, discrimination or other psychological difficulties during your acculturative experience as an international student.

Your participation might have an indirect psychological risk since you will be asked to recall your experiences. I will make every effort to minimize these risks, but please find help by calling Crisis Services Canada (1-833-456-4566) if you feel any mental discomfort. For people who currently live in China, you can contact the free psychological consult service in Beijing with 010-82951332.

Benefits: You will have the opportunity to reflect on your acculturative experience. Our discussion will reflect on your reasons to stay here or return to China, and you will have the

chance to review what you have gained from your cross-cultural experiences. It is possible that you gain personal improvement through the process.

Your contribution to this study will benefit society since this study aims to help Chinese students with their choices of staying in Canada, returning to China or relocate to another country. The outcome of this research has the potential to help both Chinese and Canadian governments with their recruitment of international students.

Compensation: There is no compensation in participating in this research.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: In order to protect your privacy, all participants in this study will not be named directly in the report. You will be given a code name, and the investigator will be the only one who has the code sheet. Any private information that may identify you will be hidden from the final report. However, if you share your experience participating in certain events, the collected data may still have a chance to indirectly reveal your identity to your acquaintances.

After each interview, the collected data will be kept safely in the investigator's home. Audio recordings of interviews will be stored in a laptop that is locked behind doors in the investigator's home, and only the principal investigator will have access to it. For academic integrity, all data (recordings and transcripts) will be safely stored for a minimum of 5 years. Nevertheless, distanced interviews via Skype or WeChat cannot be guaranteed fully confidential. Even though the topic of this research is not politically sensitive, for security purposes, operating companies of Skype or WeChat reserve their rights to review content on their platforms.

Destruction of Data: For academic integrity, all data (recordings and transcripts) will be safely stored for a minimum of 5 years after the thesis dissertation. After this period, all data will be

destroyed. Digital recordings will be deleted immediately, while field notes and other paper documents will be shredded.

Study Results: All conducted data will be used to complete a master's thesis. The finished study will be presented in Spring 2020. It will be open to students and faculty of the School of Communication at the University of Ottawa.

Once the final report is completed, it will be emailed to you as well.

Contact Information about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, please contact the researcher or the Thesis Supervisor, Boulou Ebanda de B'éri (ddboulou@uottawa.ca).

Contact for Complaints: If you have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

Conditions of Participation

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published
- I consent to participate in the interview
- I consent to the audio recording of the interview

- I consent to be re-contacted after the interview if you need certain clarification on the interview content

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTOOD THIS AGREEMENT.

I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date: